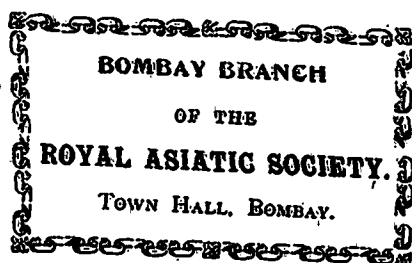




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History of France  
by  
Emile de Bonnechose  
to  
the revolution of 1848  
in two volumes

Vol. I.

101687

Authorised translation, edited by  
S.O. Beeton

From the Thirteenth edition  
SS B 38

London

Ward, Lock and Tyler

Warwick House, Paternoster Row

1868.



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NAPOLÉON has said, "The history of France must be written in two volumes or in a hundred." The latter task is beyond the powers of one man. Whilst still young I dared to undertake the former; and when, a few years after the Revolution of 1830, I first printed this work, we had not in our language any *précis* of our history continued down to a contemporary period. In writing these volumes, I purposed presenting to my reader, in a compact form, a comprehensive set of events, describing the principal causes and the great men who gave birth to, or who directed them; and to elicit from the confused mass of details the particular character of each epoch. In a word, to exhibit what, through past centuries, France owes to the force of circumstances, to chance, to the progress of time and civilization. This very arduous task was in my first work but very incompletely carried out.

In the succeeding editions of my history, I very much extended the narrative, and more than once I modified either my exposition of facts, or my deductions from them. There is a wide interval between the transient glances of youth and the clearer observation of mature age; the historian, as his view becomes wider and his knowledge deeper, feels the necessity for making his reader acquainted with his progress, that he may share in the narrator's more advanced views as to men and things. Besides, what thoughtful man, living in the agitated time which we have lived, could be vain enough never to correct his judgment by the lessons of events and experience? Nevertheless, opinions as to essential points have not varied; and it will not, perhaps, be useless to make here, in a few words, my profession of principle on the twofold point of view of morals and policy in history.

At the present day, as in the past, I believe that the immutable morals are the same for nations as for individuals; and that it is the light of conscience illumined by Divine agency that we must judge the history of entire humanity. At the present time, as formerly, I believe in the upward growths of ideas and of manners, aided by the advan-

in commerce and industry, and recently by so many admirable discoveries, are tending to make the peoples understand better every day that they are not the natural enemies of each other; that the waves and seas are not placed between nations as eternal barriers to separate them, but as the mighty means of bringing together and uniting them. I believe, contrarily from what was believed in pagan antiquity, that the individual is not made for the State, but the State for individuals; and that the more freely men are allowed to exercise all their rights, under the guidance of religion, of morals, and of law, the more shall we see the State increase in prosperity and in power. I believe, finally, that the best governments are those which elevate the moral and intellectual level of the people, increase the general well-being, and cause the greatest possible number of persons to participate in the benefits of civilization. Such are the truths which the historian, according to my lights, is bound to receive and never to lose sight of.

In the primitive scheme of this work, as in all the subsequent editions of it, I concluded my narrative with the Revolution of 1830. I showed how monarchical and parliamentary government had been introduced among us, and I briefly recounted the first period of its existence. It remained for me to narrate the latter period, and to say how France, after having possessed parliamentary and monarchical liberty during thirty-four years, lost it.

During the first years which followed the Revolution of February, and whilst a return to the fundamental principles of a representative and parliamentary monarchy appeared chimerical, the duty of the historian was to let the heat of political passions subside, and silently to mature his judgment on recent events. He might thus be able to refrain from dwelling on painful recollections, especially for those men whose errors, less than whose services, whose honourable character, whose rare virtues, France has never been able to forget. But at this day, when the nation seems about to awake, and when so many eloquent and generous men recall to mind the ideas and the traditions of free government, it is no longer seemly in the historian to remain quiescent. He must remember that history is the guide of peoples, and that to aid them, and to preserve them from shipwreck, it must signal to contemporaries the errors which others have struck and broken.

And, the more general and ardent the desire to regain lost liberties, the more necessary, at the same time, is the study of the reign which

alone can tell us how those liberties perished. The truth as to this reign has never been wholly told. It has been distorted by its enemies, and often obscured by its friends, whilst by many mere spectators of events as they happened, and by many who have written on this period, after taking therein a more or less active part, the verities have been presented in a very attenuated form. It could not be otherwise. Rarely, indeed, do we resign ourselves to accept equally the honour of success, or the responsibility of disgrace, and it seems a dangerous thing to reveal the wounds of a régime which we aspire to see renewed. Many feel constrained to draw a veil over or keep back the truth, out of a very commendable regard for great misfortunes. More are afraid of causing displeasure—either to actors in the events of yesterday, or to those who may be participators in the events of to-day or to-morrow. Each one makes terms with his recollections. We seek to set up an illusion, and the opinion takes root that the greatest political and social deluge of this century was an effect without any necessary or logical cause,—the simple result of an unfortunate concurrence of exceptional and fortuitous circumstances. Thus no one has any very serious reproaches to make against himself. Destiny has so designed, Fatality has done it all.

Is it well that we should write history thus, with posterity before our eyes? Do we know what we are doing by these compromises, these cowardly evasions? We forget the truth spoken by Montesquieu, that “behind great events there are always great moral causes;” and we fail to see that if no one be responsible for the misfortunes we deplore, we must demand an account from these very institutions which we regret, from these very lost liberties which we desire to see recalled. Thus become justifiable in the eyes of many men political indifference, distrust, disdain even, for parliamentary government, and for those liberties to which they attribute all our misfortunes. Such must be the inevitable results of the defaults of history, of interested or generous reticence, of complaisant and fatal frauds. No! if the most essential of our political liberties have perished, the fault lies not in these liberties, nor with the charters in which they are written; the loss is due partly to individuals, partly to causes which will be examined in their place. I shall here indicate but one cause, particularly disastrous under a representative form of government, and I shall call public attention, with many other writers, to the abuses of our administrative system, and to the dangers of excessive centralization—the unhappy legacy of the old régime and of the first Empire.

I wish not to be misunderstood. In pronouncing at this period, with almost the whole of my countrymen, against centralization without limits, I nevertheless acknowledge all the advantages it has lent, during many centuries, to the unity of public power; and I do not forget the most characteristic fact of our history which exhibits France, from the days of Charlemagne down to an epoch approaching our own, ever increasing in power and extent, according as the power of the Sovereign or of the State grew and absorbed within itself all other powers. No one at the present day can deny that which the royal authority, aggrandized and firmly established, has done in consolidating territory, in putting an end to intestine wars, in delivering the people from feudal oppression. I will go further. In a great country like France, formed out of many states for a long period almost strangers to each other, and surrounded by powerful neighbours, a force capable of maintaining the integrity of the soil, of preserving order and peace within, of acting abroad, and extending afar our relations and our influence, is an incontestible necessity, and one which all judicious men are constrained to admit.

But when overleaping every barrier, this same central power, in place of widening the sources of a people's life, hinders and limits them, as was the case in France during the second half of the reign of Louis XIV.; when it contracts or destroys the liberties necessary to the equilibrium of the social forces; when, instead of stimulating the activity, the vigilance, and the energy of every member of the State, it benumbs and paralyzes them; when it tends, by substituting itself for the combined actions of all, to deprive every individual member of the State of the desire to act, this central power becomes, instead of a means of progress, an obstacle and a danger.

During the last century we may discover many points of resemblance between the practices of the French administration and the governments of China and of the Lower Empire; and if there was in the legitimate aspirations of France in 1789 an idea which dominated every other, an idea common to all the three orders of the State, an idea clearly and warmly expressed by all, it was the desire to throw off the yoke of centralized administration. Open the famous records of the period, and at every page we shall see, under one form or another, the same complaints, the same hopes.

The dangers to which excessive centralization gives rise both for governments and the governed have been exposed in our own time by

the most eminent men, and the Emperor himself has admitted the evil by displaying the desire to apply a remedy. Of the consequences of such a system I shall confine myself to the recalling the most pernicious, from the double point of view of morals and of policy. On the one hand, we see face to face with the omnipotence of the State the complete separation from power of every non-official man, and his absolute impotence, whence most frequently result the forgetfulness of the public weal, the entire absorption of the individual in material and private interests, general apathy and abasement of character. On the other hand, we see the inherent instability of institutions, of laws, of interests, and of affairs when the governmental or administrative machine works in such a way that it needs but the touch of a bold and firm hand upon the principal wheel, upon the chief motor, to render all resistance impossible, to establish by coercion a victory over order.

To account for a condition of things rife in revolutions of all kinds, more often under a representative *régime* than any other, and denounced to the preceding generation in austere and indignant language by the illustrious Royer-Collard when passing in review some of the most famous events of the revolutionary, consular, and imperial epochs, he named but a sole cause—administrative centralization—growing and gathering strength under the most diverse forms of government, and planting its foot upon the ruins of every institution where French liberties had found a fleeting refuge. “Monstrous power,” said he, “power destructive, among other liberties, of electoral liberty, without which Ministerial responsibility is but a dead letter, and representative government but a fiction and a phantom.” Such was the gnawing evil which Royer-Collard pointed out in the state of France under the Restoration, an evil which has existed under every subsequent reign: it has proved a mortal wound to the one *régime* as to the other.

To struggle against an evil so deeply rooted, to cripple the action of this absorbing and limitless power, two methods present themselves: we may restrain it by abridging the number of its prerogatives, or by setting up beside it other powers and other forces. These two means may be essayed simultaneously; to speak truly, they are but one and the same, for to abridge excessive powers is to create salutary checks.

In favour of this view there is the feeling, growing stronger every day, which tells each of us that our revolution has destroyed too much, has broken too many of our traditions, has too far forgotten that nations, no

less than families and individuals, cannot violate natural laws, and consequently cannot, without peril, separate themselves entirely from their past. Further, if it were shown that there was something in the constitution of ancient France the loss of which was to-day much regretted, would it be but acting courageously and sensibly if we sought to recover it—at least, if there were anything to be regained, if all had not been so completely destroyed that not a trace could be discovered?

It is a fact of the highest importance, according to my view, that there exists in France an opinion favourable to this research—to this examination. We feel, and we acknowledge, that the administrative power, at the present day omnipotent and concentrated about the very heart of the State, can only wisely be limited and balanced by other mighty forces, whose component parts should work freely; and already our glances are directed towards that one, of all our institutions, where abides some feeble remnants of the liberties of ancient France—I mean the institution of General Councils of our departments.

Great and legitimate hopes lie in this direction; there lies the germ of a fruitful institution, as is proved by our esteem for these modest assemblies. But this esteem is only a happy sign, a wholesome presage; the call to follow in this track is but faint. What, indeed, in a vast empire can these feeble deliberative, or rather consultative bodies, effect—elected only yesterday, without any grave powers, meeting so rarely, and for so short a time? What a wide interval between them and the ancient meetings in our country of States and of Provincial Assemblies,\* the happy attributes of which, before the French Revolution, an eloquent and able pen has recently recalled to our memory. What are they, in fine, compared with those Provincial States which in neighbouring countries—in Belgium and in Holland—are, through their delegates, permanently and successfully acting as the agents of the executive power?

It is not solely as a guarantee of the maintenance of the public liberties that the prerogatives and the authority of our departmental assemblies should be increased; it is desirable they should possess enlarged powers in order that those who take part in their deliberations should be raised in rank thereby; thus the right to sit in them would become the object of a high and legitimate ambition, the sole means perhaps of mitigating the evil which devours us, of arresting that furious

\* See the remarkable work of M. de Lavergne, on "The Provincial Assemblies of France previous to 1789."



and disordered movement which precipitates the provinces upon Paris, which each day draws away from the limbs of the social body more blood and more vital strength to throw them upon the heart, where the plethora is mortal.\*

Statesmen, celebrated publicists, have understood the necessity of creating or rather of re-establishing throughout the extensive territories of our departments the powerful elements of local forces, and of strong incentives to human activity.

Already in some parts power has been brought together to act on the springs of justice, of military authority, and of public instruction. It remains to give action to this power. This appears possible only by reanimating in a sufficient degree the representative elements of the country, so that the elective assemblies shall represent not simply departments, but vast portions of the soil, called indifferently territorial or seigniorial divisions.

I shall dare to go farther; and may my presumption be pardoned to one of the historians of our old France! I shall dare to dispute the right to obliterate some of the names of our ancient provinces, at the risk of wounding that fatal levelling tendency in France beneath which I have always seen, whether under a monarchical or republican form, the most powerful auxiliary to despotism. It has dragged our sires over that dangerous path opened by the author of the "*Contrat Social*," when out of hatred for privileges they brought down all things to the level of tyrannical unity, and when they thought that in order to be free it sufficed to be equal. The members of the Constituent Assembly at least acted logically: resolved to erase every vestige of the institutions of our country; all powerful in the centre of the State;—it being moreover necessary to their purpose to render all opposition impossible—there were no more effectual means for the execution of their project than those

\* I can only give here a few sketches, and it is not the place to create a system. Preoccupied, in the interests of general liberty, with increasing the power of the great provincial elective assemblies, I have not spoken of the cantonal and communal organization. It will be understood that these will form the basis of the institutions destined to moderate the administrative central force, and to balance it. A celebrated writer, Mr. John Stuart Mill, has said: "In many cases though individuals may not do the particular thing so well, on the average, as the officers of Government, it is nevertheless desirable that it should be done by them rather than by the Government, as a means to their own mental education." I invite the reader to peruse the excellent comments of M. Edouard Laboulaye, on the system of Mr. Mill, in his work, "*De l'Etat et de ses limites*," pp. 53-68.

they conceived and carried out. Perceiving an obstacle to their enterprise in the ancient provincial organization of the country, they extinguished our provinces; they divided them, split them up into scanty fragments, deprived them of all common action, and of all those natural bonds created by heroic names, memorials, and historical traditions. The provinces thus isolated and separated one from the other, it presently needed but the word of a master to prevent their making the least effort without his orders, or of settling for themselves the simplest question or the most trifling affairs. Paris thus became more and more the burning hearthstone of all our interests, of all political contests, and of all ambition; the equilibrium of the body social has been disturbed for the apparent benefit of a single city; on the banks of the Seine there has been concentrated movement and life, whilst almost everywhere else there is nought but paralysis and death.

I am of those who are struck by the perils of such a state of things, and who believe that it is imperative to act against the baleful tendency which dragged our fathers so far. To carry out our purpose, we must show ourselves to be as logical as they were; they have mutilated and divided the limbs of France in order to enfeeble them; we must now restore life to them, reunite them and group them together according to the natural affinities indicated by geography and by history. That which has been overthrown to the vital prejudice of local liberties, the veritable ramparts of all political liberties, we must restore in the highest possible degree, for the advantage of those very liberties to which we afresh aspire, and which an august speaker has rightly called the crowning of the edifice.

Utopia! cry the clever and superstitious admirers of unity. I am aware how strongly prejudice acts against such a work, against any reconstitution of provincial powers. A writer already cited, M. Lavergne, although he has demonstrated better than any one else the action of the provincial assemblies created under Louis XVI., yet seems to me not to have completely comprehended all the bearings of the act which has destroyed our provinces. "This act," he says, "by which appellations derived from a river or a mountain have been substituted for the ancient names of the provinces of France, had neither advantages nor disadvantages, being only revolutionary child's play." No, it is not child's play to substitute for a national name, surrounded by the spell of centuries, a new name which recalls nothing to the mind—to the memory. It is in

this respect that states and bodies are constituted like historical families ; in snatching from them their past, their traditions, the honour and renown of their acts, you deprive every one of the high ambition of being allied with them, of the legitimate pride of being an off-shoot from them. Alas, France, so jealous of her honour, of her preponderance, towards foreign nations, is afraid of herself and of her past ! Her history, if one of the most humble of those who have written it may be permitted to say so, her history is that of her provinces ; we cannot read a page of it without meeting their glorious names, those of her ancient geographical subdivisions, so familiar to the ears of our ancestors, and so rapidly being effaced from our own minds. The French provinces appear not only in our own history but in the history of Europe, in the literature of all the peoples of the world ; some of these provinces have conquered kingdoms ; they reappear everywhere except in our own official and political language and on our own maps, to the inexpressible astonishment of strangers, but not of ourselves !\* This forgetfulness is so great, this sad prejudice so deeply rooted that it is doubtful whether France could of herself open her eyes to the enormity of the injury she has done against herself : a cruel and deep wound which perhaps only a firm will at the summit of the State can close and heal. Come what may, the glory—a pure and lasting glory—will be assured to the prince who, without lessening the proper powers of the State, shall create, or rather re-establish in France, under whatever denomination, numerous centres of interests, of powerful action, and of life ; to him who, like the prophet of old, shall say, “ Arise ! ” to these languishing limbs of the State, to these dry bones ; to him who shall found in various parts of the empire firm institutions, natural protections of the rights and interests of all, and, to use the words of an illustrious man, “ capable, should they be wounded, of uttering a loud and succour-bringing cry of anguish.”†

But, as we know, just as the most solid ramparts oppose but a poor resistance if they have not behind them disciplined arms and intrepid hearts,

\* That which I believe to be desirable and practicable to save from oblivion the old names of our provinces exists, and has been recently enforced upon a very important point as to territory. The names of Savoy and of Upper Savoy have been given to two new departments of France. What danger can there now be of doing for the interior of the Empire, and for provinces of France centuries old, that which has been done without disadvantage and without fear for a frontier territory of recent annexation ?

† Royer-Collard.

so we see the best institutions offer but a weak defence if those who possess them have not the heart to maintain, and are ignorant how to defend them: they always show themselves feeble and clumsy, if they be not surrounded by moral and temporal interests to watch over, by rights and liberties to demand or to maintain; sole means by which all can be gradually brought to comprehend and to practise their duty towards their country. It is, thus that the men of our workshops and of our fields may rise to a sense of the public weal, above the too material occupations which at this day absorb, without enlarging, their intelligence.

Among the rights and liberties which every Frenchman has an interest in demanding or in defending, the most sacred are those of conscience and of worship. The noblest minds of our time, belonging to parties the most opposite, but alike animated by love of country and of wise progress, agree in the view that religious liberty is the root and the mother of the most essential of the liberties of modern peoples. Those who are free, and those who aspire to become so; all, Catholics or Protestants, declare the religious sentiment, a firm Christian belief, to be the grand foundation of the liberty, no less than the prosperity of some of the neighbouring peoples, and the most powerful instrument for resisting internal tyranny or foreign oppression.\* My voice joins with their eloquent voices in protesting against all trammels imposed upon the free exercise of religious worship; against maintaining by the edicts of authority, a pretended uniformity of belief, too often only an apparent uniformity, the sad product of indifference or ignorance, and which before long conducts a people to the worst of deaths—by moral and spiritual atrophy.

It imports very much less whether men belong to this or that Christian community, than that they hold in their hearts the belief in God and the gospel. The chief, the indispensable thing is, that they should be Christians, and Christians by conviction. In vain during modern days, so different from antique times, shall we seek for a free nation outside Christianity, a truth which is comprised in the grand words of De Tocqueville: "If the people are unbelievers, they must be serfs; if they are free, they must be believers." No perils then in liberty: in throwing off

\* I shall cite only three, because in my eyes they are the most eminent representatives of the three distinct religious tendencies—MM. de Montalembert, de Pressensé, and Laboulaye. All three are unanimous on the point.

externally an illegal and tyrannical yoke, men will retain for themselves that of divine law, the most lawful and most sacred of all yokes; and whilst astonishing the world by prodigies of heroism, they will not terrify it by their crimes. Servants of a living God and of the gospel, they will accomplish what anti-Christian France of the eighteenth century could not achieve. Should liberty be wanting to them, they must conquer it, and having conquered it, they must guard it.

Stop here. I thought that a profession of principles, clear and distinct, would not be out of place at the head of a work wherein I have endeavoured to draw from events a moral lesson, and to demonstrate under what conditions a people acquires liberty and preserves it. Of these conditions some are universal and immutable, as I have already shown in another work.\* Others necessarily vary according to time, circumstances, and the genius of races. But if it be true that popular liberty consists in a whole people participating in the direction of its own affairs, it is but a delusion if this participation be only imaginary. Popular liberty is only possible in our vast modern states by the voice of representation, and we cannot have a Government representative and free save when representation is sincere and thorough.

The continued violation of this vital condition of free governments necessarily conduces to despotism, or to fresh revolutions; a formidable truth which cannot too strongly be brought to light during the present period when political liberty appears ready to take root in France. I have essayed this work, the more difficult because of the narrow limits of my framework. I have done my task without anger, most often with sorrow, always with a profound feeling of the duties of the historian, of the danger towards unborn generations of ignoring the truth as to contemporary times. It is undoubtedly fitting that all friends of the public weal, to whatever party they may formerly have belonged, should forget their dissensions; it is good that they should mutually pardon each other's errors and defects; but it is needful that they institute a severe scrutiny of these errors and defects. Merely to throw a convenient veil over the past is not to serve but to compromise the cause of those liberties which we love and which we have lost;—is, as I have already stated, to bring back that very evil which has not been able to preserve these liberties from shipwreck.

Free institutions and the great principles which they represent,

\* "*Histoire d'Angleterre depuis l'origine jusqu'à la Révolution française.*"

are the highest expression of political genius among the civilized nations of modern Europe. The governments of the monarchs of the stagnant East, of the Cæsars of pagan Rome, of Sultans and of Viziers, are the governments of infant or decrepit peoples steeped in ignorance or brutishness. There is nothing there to imitate, nothing to borrow for the French nation—a viril and Christian nation. The Prince who governs France has already many times expressed the generous desire to increase her franchises. That desire is sincere. I will never admit that an able Prince, knowing his strength, and imbued with the feeling of true greatness, would prefer the enjoyment of absolute power to the honour of reigning over a people truly free; I will not believe that any monarch would not, like one of our old rulers, be more happy and more proud to command Freemen than Slaves, FRANKS than SERFS.

In extending my work to a recent and very celebrated date, in alluding to deep wounds still bleeding, I have not deceived myself as to the perils of the enterprise. Warnings as to it have not been wanting, and friendly voices have been raised, telling me that notwithstanding my efforts to reconcile truth with the respect due to character, to talent, and to misfortune, it would be rashness in me to display perhaps a wide divergence from men very properly highly placed in public esteem: but their acts belong to history, and the time is past when I should be able to pardon in myself the apprehensions of vulgar prudence. I have reached that period of life when duty is endowed in men's eyes with renewed authority, when a single ambition is allowed to reside in our souls—that of being useful to mankind. I have but one thing to ask from men, a very great thing, it is true, and most difficult to obtain from them—their confidence.

I ask it for the historian very much more than for the work, necessarily imperfect. What a field for errors, indeed, the space of twenty centuries! But in soliciting the indulgence of the reader for my faults, I believe that I have never given to any one the right to place in doubt my veracity, my sincerity as a writer. If, notwithstanding all my efforts, I have not been able, in touching upon a contemporary period, to steer completely clear of reefs or rocks, I make bold to allege in my justification the grand and simple words that have run through the centuries, and which every historian worthy of the name should carefully preserve in the depths of his heart—I BELIEVE; THAT IS WHY I HAVE SPOKEN.

EMILE DE BONNECHOSE.

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# HISTORY OF FRANCE.

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## INTRODUCTION.

### I.

#### GAUL BEFORE THE ROMAN CONQUEST.

THE vast territory contained between the Rhine, the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Ocean, and which is now almost entirely known as France, originally bore the name of Gaul. In the most remote periods it was occupied by the Celtic race of the Gaëls and by the Iberians. The Gaëls formed the basis of the Gallic population, and drove the Iberians back into Spain. Still, the latter people did not entirely disappear from the soil of France, but partly occupied some southern countries, under the name of Aquitanians or Ligurians.

The Phœceans, a people of Greece, eventually formed important establishments in the south of Gaul; and one of their colonies founded the city of Marseilles, or Massalia.

Another nation, that of the Kymrys,\* made an irruption into Gaul about three centuries B.C., the greater part of them settling between the Seine and the German Ocean. These Kymrys are identical with the Belgæ or Belgs mentioned by Cæsar, to whom he attributes a German origin. A portion of the Kymrys went even

\* The Kymrys are generally confounded with the Cimbri. This opinion has recently met with learned contraditors; one of whom, M. Roget de Belloquet, in his "Gallic Glossary," an introduction to his "Gallic Ethnology," regards the Kymrys as closely related with the Gaëls, and considers the Cimbri as an entirely different and essentially Germanic nation.

further, and established themselves upon the seaboard as far as the mouth of the Loire, where they received the name of Armoricans, or maritime races. All these tribes are indistinctly designated in history by the name of Gauls. They were generally distinguished for frankness, courage, and generosity : they were hospitable, but intemperate ; fond of sumptuous repasts, and ready for quarrels, which frequently ensanguined their banquets. They were divided into a multitude of smaller tribes or clans, constantly engaged in war with each other.

The Gauls originally adored the material forces of nature, thunder, the winds, and the planets ; but as they advanced in civilization they worshipped the moral powers, and deified the virtues and the arts. Their best-known divinities are, Hesus, the genius of war ; Teutates, the god of commerce and inventor of the arts ; and Oginus, the god of eloquence and poetry.

Their priests, called Druids, were divided into three orders : the *druids*, properly so called, who were the interpreters of the laws, instructors of youth, and judges of the people ; next, the *vates*, or *ovates*, intrusted with the divinations and sacrifices ; and, lastly the *bards*, who preserved in their songs the reminiscences of national traditions, which they were forbidden to record in writing, and the exploits of their heroes.

The priesthood was hierarchical, and had as its head a sole chief elected for life, whose power was unbounded. The *ovates* and *bards* lived in public as members of the community ; but the *druids* of the first class dwelt together in profound retreats, where they initiated into their mysteries and sciences the young disciples who aspired to the sacred functions. The novitiate was painful, and sometimes lasted twenty years ; but the great privileges attaching to the *druids*, their exemption from taxation, the respect shown to them, and the authority they exercised, concurred to attract numerous disciples. Their books and precepts were composed in verse, and were learned by heart ; for it was an invariable rule with them that no law should be recorded in writing. They taught the immortality of souls, and their perpetual transmigration, until they deserved admission to the celestial mansions. They were versed in natural philosophy. Cæsar, in his "Commentaries on the Gallic War," tells us that they instructed youth in the movements of the stars and the grandeur of the universe, as well as in the nature

of things and the power of the immortal gods, the most revered of whom was Mercury, inventor of all the arts, guide of travellers, and protector of commerce.

There were among them druidesses, or females affiliated to their order, some of whom adhered to celibacy. These women were the object of great veneration: they were supposed to have a foreknowledge of events, and were said to be endowed with the gift of curing diseases and commanding the elements.

At certain periods of the year, and on all solemn occasions, the druids made sacrifices, offering to the gods the fruits of the earth, domestic animals, and human victims. They believed, with the majority of the ancient nations, that human life could alone be ransomed by that of their fellow-men, and that the offering most agreeable to the gods was the blood of criminals. They also sacrificed prisoners of war; and, in default of culprits or captives, a victim was designated by lot: frequently, too, men devoted themselves in order to appease the wrath of the gods. The sacrifices were effected either by fire, which consumed wicker-work monsters in which the priests enclosed the victims or by the sword, upon large stones hollowed out on the surface, and which, laid horizontally on other stones placed in a vertical position, formed altars called *dolmans*. A great number of these are still in existence, and clumsy representations of trees and animals may be seen carved on them.\*

The druids attributed a medical and magical virtue to vervain, snakes' eggs, and, above all, to mistletoe, which they plucked with mysterious ceremonies from oaks, trees regarded by them as being under the special protection of the gods. They had their retreats and principal sanctuaries in the depths of gloomy forests, where no one was allowed to fell or lop wood. The people believed these sacred retreats inaccessible to wild animals, impenetrable by the storm, and protected from lightning: the ground in them, it was said, trembled, and abysses opened, from whence darted snakes that clung to the

\* In some parts of France, and especially in the west, other druidic monuments are found called *pentrans* or *mencheis*; they are enormous blocks of uncut stones, set up either separately, or arranged in several rows in avenues, as at Carnac, where they form eleven parallel lines covering an immense extent of ground. A third variety of druidic monuments consists of *tumuli*, or conical mounds of earth surmounting a tomb.

trees, which bent and straightened of their own accord, while the whole forest sparkled with fires. The druids kept in these forests the military standards, to which they alone had access; and it is recorded that they were themselves not uninfluenced by terror on entering them.

The power exercised by the druids was not solely religious, but political and social, for they were at the same time priests and magistrates. At a solemn assembly held twice a year on the frontier of the country of the Carnutes, (pays Chartrain), which was reputed to be the central point of Gaul, they delivered judgment and had cognizance of nearly all public and private disputes. If any crime was committed, or a quarrel ensued about an inheritance, they decided it; and to them also belonged the right of rewarding and punishing. The most formidable punishment was the interdict, and they pronounced it against any man who proved rebellious or indocile to them. Those whom the druids had interdicted from sacrificing were placed in the ranks of criminals, any appeal to justice was closed to them, and they were shunned as though afflicted with a contagious disease.

Among the Gauls each tribe had, at the first, its special chief, who ordinarily assumed the title of king. These princes, almost absolute in war, were during peace subject, like the rest of the nation, to the despotic authority of the priests, who were for a lengthened period omnipotent in Gaul. Each tribe had also a species of military equestrian corps, composed of nobles or knights. Around these, men assembled—persons of free though inferior condition, who selected from among the nobles a defender or patron, to whom they attached themselves. They escorted him everywhere, followed him to the wars, and, in exchange for the protection and rewards they awaited at his hands, devoted themselves to his person, even more than to his fortune, and were ready to die or live for him. The rank of a noble or knight was estimated by the number of followers who formed his escort. The mass of the population had no participation in public affairs, save in revolutions caused by the rivalry of the knights, priests, and nobles, which were as frequent as the quarrels and wars between the various tribes. Still, in spite of these clannish feuds, the sentiment of a common nationality existed among the Gauls; and at certain periods deputies from all the tribes assembled to watch together over the interests of the whole community.

It was impossible for the numerous tribes, which were more occupied with war than with the cultivation of the soil, to find sufficient resources among themselves. Several of them emigrated *en masse*. Countless hordes left Gaul at different epochs and spread over the adjacent countries and even remote lands, which they ravaged, and where they went to conquer a new country. Among the causes which produced these migrations, the chief, next to want of food, was the temper of the Gauls, to whom repose was disagreeable, and who, rather than remain at home in peace, entered the military service of foreign nations.\* Frequently, too, the tribes conquered in civil discords, abandoned their country, and sought fortune far away.

There arose in various parts of the world, nations originating in Gallic colonies: one of these, in Spain, formed, by fusion with the natives, the celebrated nation of the Celtiberians, who offered the most strenuous resistance to the Roman invasion; and others settled in different points of Great Britain, peopling, in the course of time, the entire southern seaboard of that island. The Gauls also burst into Italy on several occasions; one of their tribes, the Umbrians, invading that country about fourteen centuries B.C. and establishing themselves in that portion to which the name of Umbria has adhered. Eight centuries later (590 B.C.) two brothers, Bellovisus and Sigovisus, nephews of a celebrated king of the Bituriges (inhabitants of Berri), each directed the flood of a formidable invasion, one in Italy, the other in Germany. The army of Bellovisus crossed the Alps, being attracted, so it is said, by the delicious fruits of the south; invaded the country to the north of the Po, and founded Milan. Fresh swarms of Gauls came one after the other to settle in the entire northern part of Italy, to which the Romans gave the name of Gallia Cisalpina (or Gaul on their side of the Alps). The principal nations, that emanated from these various immigrations were—to the north of the Po, the Insubri and Cenomani, and, to the south of that river, the Boieni, Lingones, and Senones. The last, in the year 390 B.C., descended southward, encountered and defeated a Roman army on the banks of the Allia, captured Rome, and attacked the Capitol. While

\* The kings of Egypt, Macedonia, Epirus, Carthage, Syracuse, and the monarchs of Asia, paid a heavy price for the help of the Gauls, whose bravery was so highly esteemed that it was thought impossible to have a good army without them.

Italy was thus a prey of the Gauls, Germany was also troubled by them. Those who followed Sigovisus penetrated as far as Pannonia, between the Danube and the Save, whence, at a later date, fresh bands rushed like a torrent over Macedonia and Greece. Other Gauls founded a colony in Thra, and then invaded Asia Minor, where they established themselves under the name of Galatians. "Gaul," says Etienne Pasquine, "like a large tree, thus extended its branches for a long distance, and the terror of the Gallic name spread over all the countries of the universe."

What Tacitus said of the Britons might equally be said of the Gauls: if they had been united, they would have been invincible. But we have seen how perpetual wars affected the interests of the numerous tribes or clans. They formed great and powerful confederations among themselves for the common defence; but war was waged among these confederations in the same way as among the separate tribes; and the Romans ever had the art of securing the support of one to crush the other. They did not venture across the Alps till they had subjugated Cisalpine Gaul; and they awaited a favourable occasion to extend their conquest further. They were in this matter powerfully seconded, not only by the war which the numerous Gallic tribes waged against each other, but also by the civil troubles and internal dissensions between the various classes. About three centuries before the Christian era, the royal government was abolished in most of the cities of Gaul, in the midst of sanguinary revolutions: the warriors and the druids disputed the authority, and the whole of Gaul was weakened by their divisions.

This intestine contest was still going on when, a century and a half before the Christian era, the Greek inhabitants of Massalia (Marseilles) invoked the assistance of Rome against the enterprises of some Gallic tribes in the vicinity. The Romans responded to this appeal; and, after conquering the Gauls, gave their territory to the city they had succoured. Thirty years later, summoned by the Massalotes against a neighbouring Gallic nation, the Salic Ligurians, the Romans were again victorious; but on this occasion they retained a portion of the conquered territory, and built, to the north of Massalia, a city originally called Aquæ Sextæ, which is, at the present day, Aix, the most ancient Roman colony founded in Gaul (B.C. 123). Eventually,



the Romans, taking advantage of disputes which had broken out between the confederation of the Hædui and that of the Allobroges and Arverni, gained two great victories over them under the leadership of the consul Fabius. The second battle was fought near the Rhone, and was one of the most sanguinary recorded in history: one hundred and twenty thousand Gauls are said to have lost their lives, either in the waters of the river, or by the sword of the conquerors. A portion of the country of the Allobroges (Dauphiné) was reduced to a Roman province, as was the entire seaboard of the Mediterranean as far as the Pyrenees.\*

The Romans founded there, 118 B.C., a celebrated colony, that of Narbonne, and gave the name of Narbonensis to the vast and splendid province which they formed in the south of Gaul. For this name that of Septimania was eventually substituted for the country situated between the Pyrenees and the Rhone; the territory contained between the latter river and the Alps alone retaining the name of Province or Provence.

The Romans did not cross the limits of the colony until about the middle of the first century B.C. They had in the interval to repulse a formidable invasion, that of the Teutons, who rushed, like a torrent which had overflowed its bed, over the Narbonensis. Marius exterminated the invaders in the year 102, near the city of Aix. Forty years later, Julius Cæsar appeared, and sought to acquire, by conquering Gaul at the head of the Roman legions, a sufficient title to reduce Rome herself to serfdom.

\* With the Romans, that portion of the Transalpine whose conquest preceded the arrival of Cæsar in Gaul, was the Province. Hence their authors are frequently found designating it by the name *Provincia*. At a later date the epithet of Narbonensis was added, when Narbonne had become its chief city. From the Latin *Provincia* is derived Provence, which title, before it was restricted to that portion of the French territory which still retains the name, spread for a long time over the whole of France. Sometimes the province was called by the name of *Gallia braccata*—derived from the breeches, in Latin *bracæ*, which the inhabitants wore; and also in opposition to the Cisalpine, where the Roman garment, the *toga*, was adopted at an early period, whence the Province obtained the name of *Gallia togata*. That part of Transalpine Gaul which still retained its independence was called Hairy Gaul, or *Gallia comata*, the various tribes being remarkable for their long hair, while the inhabitants of the Province wore theirs short, after the Roman fashion. (Courgeon, "*Recits de l'Histoire de France*," vol. i., p. 43, note 1.)

## II.

## CONQUEST OF GAUL BY CÆSAR.

IN his immortal work, the "Commentaries," Cæsar has himself drawn the picture of the country, at the period when he arrived in it as Proconsul. "The whole of Gaul," he says, "is divided into three parts, of which one is inhabited by the Belgæ, another by Aquitani, and the third by those whom we call, at Rome, Galli, and who, in their language, call themselves Cœlti. These nations differ from each other in language, manners, and laws. The Gauls (Celts) are separated from the Aquitanians by the Garonne, from the Belgians by the Marne and the Seine. The Belgæ are the bravest of all these tribes; strangers to the elegant manners and civilization of the Roman Province, they do not receive from external trade those products of luxury which enervate courage; and, moreover, as neighbours of the Germans who live on the other bank of the Rhine, they are continually at war with each other.

"The part inhabited by the Gauls (Celts) begins at the Rhone, and has for its boundaries the Garonne, the ocean, and the country of the Belgæ; it also extends as far as the Rhine on the side of the Helvetii (Swiss) and Sequani (Franche Comté); it is situated in the north. The country of the Belgæ begins at the extreme frontier of Gaul, and is bounded by the lower part of the course of the Rhine; its position is in the north-east. Aquitania is bounded by the Garonne, the Pyrenees, and the ocean."

These three great nations were divided, as we have already seen, into a multitude of independent states, in the majority of which royalty had been abolished for the last three centuries, and which were governed by an aristocratic assembly, called by the Romans the Senate, in which two factions disputed the power. One of the most frequent causes of discord was the choice of alliances which it was necessary to make, in the midst of the general conflagration frequently produced by the rivalry of two tribes. "In Gaul," says Cæsar, "each town, each canton, and nearly each family, is divided into factions: before the entrance of the Roman legions into Gaul, some inclined to the Hædûi, and others to the Sequani.

The latter, too weak of themselves, because the principal authority had been for a long time in the hands of the Hædui who possessed the largest number of supporters, had united with Ariovistus, king or the Germans, whom they attached to them by presents and promises. Victors in several battles, in which they destroyed the whole of the Hæduan nobility, the Sequani acquired so much power, that a great number of tribes, formerly allied to the Hædui, went over to their side. They took away as hostages the sons of the chief citizens, imposed on the nation the oath to undertake nothing against them, seized that portion of the territory conquered by their armies, and obtained the preponderance through the whole of Gaul." Such was the internal state of the country when Cæsar appeared there.

The future conqueror first displayed himself to the Gallic nations in the character of a protector. They were menaced by a formidable invasion. Three hundred thousand Helvetians, after burning their own towns, and ruining their own fields, so as to destroy all hope of return, had just invaded the country of the Sequani and the Hædui. These innumerable hordes had already commenced an attack on the neighbouring Allobrogès, when, summoned by these nations, Cæsar hurried up at the head of his legions, defeated the Helvetians in three sanguinary engagements, and drove them beyond the Jura, into the deserts they had themselves produced. Deputies from nearly the whole of Gaul (Celtica) afterwards came to congratulate the victorious hero.

Some time later, after the general assembly of the Gauls had been convened, the same citizens returned to Cæsar; and, throwing themselves at his feet, conjured him to deliver them from Ariovistus and his Germans, who, called in by the imprudent Sequani, were now oppressing their own allies and the whole of trembling Gaul. Cæsar alone could save the country from an impending and cruel servitude. The Proconsul responded to their appeal and marched against the terrible Ariovistus. The Germans were defeated, and the *débris* of their dispersed army only halted on the banks of the Rhine, twenty leagues from the field of battle. This was Cæsar's first campaign in Gaul.

The domination of the Germans was succeeded by that of the Romans. Cæsar imposed his will on the country; and the Gauls (Celts)

soon perceived that they had given themselves a master in this formidable auxiliary. They desired a change, some through patriotism, others through inconstancy and levity of character.\* They applied to the Belgæ to deliver them from the Romans, just as they had, in the previous year, called the latter to help them against the Germans. The Belgians entered into a league: but Cæsar had made an alliance with one of their most important tribes, the Remi; and, introduced by them into the heart of Belgium, he crushed the confederates on the banks of the Aisne with a frightful carnage, and then exterminated the Meroii (people of Hainault), beyond the Sambre. Of 60,000 combatants scarce 500 escaped, and the name of the nation disappeared. The Adriatici (a people encamped between the Sambre and the Meuse) being, however, still in arms in Belgium, Cæsar stormed Mannes, their principal town, massacred a part of its defenders, and reduced the rest to servitude, no less than 53,000 prisoners being sold as slaves: His lieutenant, Crassus, next subjugated Armorica. Cæsar had only appeared, and already the whole of Gaul seemed conquered. At the news of this extraordinary success, fifteen days' rejoicings were decreed at Rome.

But the resolutions of the Gauls were prompt and unforeseen. In the following year (56 B.C.) Cæsar, who was then in Illyria, learned that the tribes of Armorica were holding as prisoners the military tribunes who had gone among them as friends to procure provisions for the seventh legion; which was in winter quarters in the territory of the Andes (Avenvins). The Veneti,† reassured by the situations of their towns, which were inaccessible by land and defended by an internal sea (the gulf of Morbihan), with whose ports, isles, and shoals the Romans were unacquainted, had given the signal; and their neighbours at once imitated them: the Britons, inhabiting

\* Commentaries (Book ii.). Cæsar frequently dwells on these traits of the Gallic character. "It is the custom in Gaul," he writes, "to compel travellers to stop, in order to interrogate them about what they know or what they have heard said. In the towns, the people surround the merchants, question them about the countries whence they came, and urge them to tell what they have learnt. It is on such rumour and reports that they frequently decide the most important matters; and they do not fail to repent of having thus put faith in uncertain news, which is frequently invented to please them."

† Tribes of Morbihan whose capital was Dariorigum, at the present day Vannes.

the island of Britain, also promised them assistance. Cæsar thereupon marched up from Illyria; and, although the Romans were almost strangers to the navigation of the ocean, a fleet was built by his orders at the mouth of the Loire. Thus prepared, the Romans attacked the enemy's fleet, and captured most of their ships, by boarding them: a calm that set in compelled the rest to surrender. The most distinguished of the warriors were put to death; and Cæsar, entering the capital as an irritated victor, caused the senators to be killed by way of example, and sold the whole of the conquered population by auction. While he was thus subjugating Armorica, his lieutenant Sabinus occupied, after several engagements, all the territory between that country and the Scine; and Crassus, being also victorious in the south, between the Loire and the Garonne, and from the latter river to the Pyrenees, the whole of Gaul was again conquered, or held in subjection.

New and innumerable enemies, however, contested his conquest with Cæsar. Germany was agitated on hearing of the disasters in Gaul, and 400,000 Usipetes or Teucteres crossed the Rhine. Cæsar, in spite of it being winter, marched against these barbarians, surprised and checked them at the confluence of the former river and the Meuse, where he exterminated nearly the whole of the horde. He then crossed the Rhine by a bridge, which he constructed in ten days, and descended the opposite bank, which point no Roman general had ever before reached.

Cæsar presently returned to Gaul, and, proceeding to the sea-coast, where Britain offered itself as a prey, he resolved to invade that island the same year, either to isolate the Britons from Gaul, punish them for the assistance they had given the Veneti, or in order to obtain a further title to the admiration of the Romans. He crossed the straits with the infantry of two legions only, and landed in sight of the enemy assembled in arms on the shore. The Romans gained several battles; but a tempest broke up and dispersed a portion of their galleys, and drove ashore eighteen vessels, with all their cavalry on board. Cæsar had never found himself in greater danger; and never did he display more remarkable daring, resource, and boldness. He collected the wrecks of his galleys, and had others built; and, besieged in his camp by the Britons whom his disaster had

encouraged, he repulsed and pursued them, proudly dictating peace, and demanding hostages. But, while speaking as an irritated master, he was preparing to retreat, and soon after re-embarked with his army.

This precipitate departure, in spite of several victories, resembled a flight; and Cæsar consequently returned the following year (B.C. 54), with several legions and a formidable fleet, resolved to make the people of Britain fully feel the power of Rome and his own. Sailing from Portus Itius,\* he landed without impediment, sought and pursued the Britons into the interior of the island, fomented divisions among them, attacked, defeated, and subdued them: he imposed an annual tribute on them, received their hostages, and returned with a multitude of captives, and without the loss of a single vessel. Rome derived but slight profit from these two expeditions; and Cæsar, as a great historian remarks, rather pointed out than gave Britain to his successors. Still, he had attained his object, in acquiring the glory which is ever attached to distant enterprises on little-known coasts; and already he had no equal in the Roman world.

The Gallic war, in which up to this time most of the nations had fought separately, appeared to be at an end; but they united, and it broke out again more terrible than ever. The two chiefs of the new confederation, which was first formed in Belgium, were Indutiomarus of the Treviri (Treves) and Ambiorix the Eburone (Liège), who arranged to surprise the legions dispersed in their winter quarters. Ambiorix surprised, in a defile, a legion on the march, and exterminated it. This first success inflamed the warlike tribes of the north (Cambresis and Hainault), and they flattered themselves with the hope of surprising a second legion, quartered in their country and commanded by Q. Cicero, brother of the orator. On this occasion the Romans did not suffer themselves to be taken off their guard; but they were shut up in their entrenched camp, which was at once closely invested. Cæsar was a long way off, but he immediately set out, and on arriving by forced marches, with only 7000 legionaries, dispersed the multitude of Gauls, and liberated the camp.

\* The site of Itius, which was situated on the seaboard of the country of the Morini (Picardy), is extremely uncertain. Some believe that it is Calais, others Mardik. It is generally thought to be the old port of Wissant, near Boulogne.

Winter suspended military operations, but both sides prepared for a new war.

So soon as spring set in, Induciomarus, the confederate of Ambiorix, marched against Labienus, who was quartered among the Remi; but the barbarian was defeated and his head sent to the general. Cæsar completely crushed the Treviri; and then, marching through the whole forest of Ardennes, fell on the Eburonēs. It was necessary that their chastisement should be terrible. Cæsar wished to destroy even the name of the guilty nation; and, inviting the neighbouring German tribes to aid him in his vengeance, he left the territory to the first occupant. In a few days this unfortunate people was annihilated, and the whole of northern Gaul appeared, for the time, pacified. In the same year the general assembly of the Gauls, presided over by Cæsar, was held at Lutetia, the capital of the Parisii.

Cæsar, however, only imperfectly attained his object by terrorism. So many frightful executions inflamed in the heart of his enemies an inextinguishable thirst for vengeance, and imparted to the conquered the courage of despair. The barbarities committed in Belgium combined against the Romans all the nations of Gaul. A young Arverucan (Auvergnat) chief, named Vercingetorix, was the soul of the general league. Elected king by his fellow-citizens, he displayed in the contest an activity, an intelligence, and a heroism, which, had he been opposed to any other than Cæsar, would have sufficed to liberate his country.

The Proconsul had recrossed the Alps, his legions were scattered about Gaul, the winter was severe, and the snow impeded any communication between them: the moment to shake off the yoke seemed to have arrived. A solemn oath, taken on the collected standards, bound together all the principal nations of Gaul, and the revolt commenced with the massacre of the Romans quartered in the city of Getabena, now Orleans. The news spread almost instantly to the furthest extremities of Gaul,\* and nearly the whole country revolted.

\* "The news soon reached all the states of Gaul; for, whenever any remarkable event occurs, they announce it to the neighbouring country by shouts, which are repeated from one to the other. Thus what had happened at Getabena at sunrise was known to the Arvernians before the close of the first evening, at a distance of 160 miles."—*De Bello Gallico*, b. vii.

Vercingetorix took possession of the fortified town of Gergovia (Clermont), whence his emissaries spread among the Gallic tribes, announcing that the hour of deliverance had arrived. His appeal was universally listened to, a supreme council was formed of confederate deputies, and the chief command was entrusted to Vercingetorix, who was speedily surrounded by a numerous and martial army. He divided it into two corps, sent one southward against the Roman province, passed with the other through the country of the Beturiges (Berri), whom he induced to revolt, and prepared to attack the legions scattered through Belgium.

Suddenly it was learned that Cæsar had reappeared in Gaul; and that, after securing the safety of the Roman province, he had crossed the snows of the Cevennes, and was now carrying fire and the sword into Arvernia. Vercingetorix turned back and flew to the defence of his native country, where, however, he wished that the Romans should find only a desert. The Arverni themselves burnt their cities so that they might not fall into the enemy's hands: twenty towns were thus destroyed, and only one, Avaricum (Bourges), the capital of the Beturiges, and one of the handsomest cities in Gaul, was spared. Cæsar soon besieged it, took it by storm, and the whole population was murdered without distinction of sex or age. The conqueror next proceeded with his whole army to besiege Gergovia. Vercingetorix had arrived under the wall of the city before him, and his camp was already set up at the foot of the ramparts. Cæsar attacked it with his accustomed vigour; but Vercingetorix drove the Romans in disorder into the plain, where they were surrounded, and would have been destroyed, had it not been for the immortal tenth legion, which checked the advance of the enemy, and enabled the fugitives to re-enter their lines.

This success inflamed the Gauls with new courage. Cæsar, abandoned by all their tribes excepting the Remi and the Lingones (inhabitants of Langues), raised the siege and retired beyond the Loire into the country of the Senones (Sens), where four legions were under the command of Labienus. The two armies joined, and Cæsar, thus reinforced, descended the valley of the Saône, in the direction of the Roman province.

During this period, a meeting took place at Bibracte (Autun) of all



the Gallic nations, which by common accord had accepted Vercingetorix as their supreme commander. Vercingetorix had moved rapidly forward to intercept the retreat of Cæsar, and came up with him. The principal strength of the Gallic army, consisting of cavalry, was sent against the Roman cavalry; but a corps of Germans in the pay of Cæsar turned the enemy's flank, and the Gallic cavalry and infantry were driven into the river. With the relics of his army Vercingetorix withdrew behind the walls of Alesia, one of the strongest places in Gaul, and Cæsar immediately followed him.\*

The siege of Alesia is the most memorable event in the conquest of Gaul. Cæsar undertook it with forces inferior to those of the besieged, and carried it on in sight of 200,000 Gauls, who had hurried up from all points to surround the city, which, being already closely invested, and suffering from the horrors of famine, despaired of deliverance. The conqueror of Gaul never displayed greater vigour, prudence, and genius than upon this occasion. Three deep lines of gigantic circumvallated works, defended by formidable intrenchments, and innumerable caltrops scattered about the trenches, or sharp stakes driven into the ground at regular distances, separated the Roman camp from the city; while other lines, no less formidable, called lines of countervallation, were formed between the camp and the Gallic army outside, running for a distance of 14,000 paces. Notwithstanding these immense precautions, the Roman camp was all but surprised, being attacked simultaneously by the army of the confederates and the garrison; but Cæsar, everywhere present, with a clear head in the most extreme danger, surveyed calmly all the points menaced, and, opposing extraordinary efforts to those of the Gauls, repulsed their double attack. At this moment the corps of German horse which he had in his pay appeared, after making a long *détour*, in the rear of the Gallic army, and fiercely attacked it at the moment when the Roman legions were compelling it to retreat. This final attack, sudden and unforeseen by all but Cæsar, decided the fate

\* This town was situated in the territory of the Mandubi. Its site is still undecided, and the question has given rise to numerous and interesting discussions among the learned. Some believe they find Alesia in Alaise, to the north of Salins in Franche Comté, while others place it at Aleson-Sainte-Reine in Mount Auxois in Burgundy. The latter opinion appears to us the better founded, after a study of the text and of topographical charts.

of the day, and that of Gaul. A panic terror seized on the conquered, who fled in disorder, and fell in thousands beneath the swords of the victorious Romans. Vercingetorix and his army were witnesses of the defeats of those from whom they expected their salvation, and re-entered the city, which was left to itself, without provisions, and incapable of prolonging its defence.

Superior to his fortune, and even to his victors, Vercingetorix sent a deputation to Cæsar, surrendering the fortress to him, and offering himself as a sacrifice to save his adherents. All the chiefs, by the Proconsul's order, were brought before him. Vercingetorix surrendered himself. Wearing his richest armour, and mounted on his war-charger, he went round the tribunal in which the impassive Proconsul was seated, and, stopping in front of the conqueror, silently threw his javelin, helmet, and sword on the ground. Cæsar was pitiless. The hero was thrown into chains and taken to Rome, where he languished in prison for six years: he was eventually brought forth to adorn the triumphal procession of Cæsar, and then died by the hand of the executioner.

Gaul never recovered from the great disaster it had undergone at the siege of Alesia, when, represented by the majority of its tribes, it was, as it were, entirely conquered in one day. A last campaign sufficed for Cæsar to extinguish the smouldering revolt in all parts of the vast territory, and he did so with blood. In this way he completely crushed the Beturiges (inhabitants of Berri), the Carnutes (people of the pays Chartrain), and the Bellovaci (people of Beauvoisis): he passed through the whole of Belgium as a conqueror, and then returned south, grasping and pressing his vast prey in his powerful hands. The last town that resisted him was the small fort of Uxellodunum, in the country of the Cadurci (Quercy), which he took by cutting off the water supply, and barbarously lopped off the hands of all its defenders, whom he sent away in this state, as living testimonies of his anger and his vengeance.

Such was the end of this terrible war, during which, as Plutarch says, Cæsar, in eight campaigns, took by storm 800 towns, subjected 300 tribes, and fought against 3,000,000 men, of whom one-third perished in the field of battle, or were massacred, while another third were reduced to a state of slavery.

Master of Gaul, which was conquered by his arms, but whose inhabitants he knew to be too brave to be held in slavery by rigour, he resolved to win them by entirely different conduct, and rendered their yoke easy. The country was reduced to the state of a Roman province, but Cæsar spared it confiscations and onerous burdens: the cities preserved their government and laws, and the tribute he imposed on the conquered was paid under the title of "military pay." Reckoning on their support for the execution of his ambitious plans, he enrolled the best Gallic warriors in his legions, conquered Rome herself by their help, and gave them in recompense riches and honours. The Roman Senate was opened to the Gauls.\*

### III.

#### GAUL UNDER THE ROMAN DOMINATION.

THE Emperor Augustus, who gave an organization to Gaul, maintained the division of the country into four great provinces, but he changed their limits, and gave the name of *Lyonnese* or *Lugdunensis* to *Gallia Celtica*, which was restricted to the territory contained between the Seine, the Saône, and the Loire; and detached from it on the east a territory to which he gave the name of *Sequanensis*, and joined to *Gallia Belgica*. The latter, when thus enlarged, had for its boundaries the Rhine, the Seine, the Saône, and the Alps. *Aquitania*, hitherto enclosed between the Pyrenees and the Garonne, extended as far as the Loire; and, lastly, *Gallia Narbonensis* was comprised between the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees, the Cevennes, and the Alps. The entire country was, in addition, divided into sixty municipal circumscriptions, or cities, the principal of which, after Lyons, the seat of the Roman government, were: Trèves, Autun, Nîmes, Bordeaux, Narbonne, Toulouse, Vienne, and Arles. Eventually, under Diocletian, the Roman Empire was divided into four great prefectures: that of Gaul, whose

\* Julius Cæsar only admitted into the Roman Senate the principal citizens of *Gallia Narbonensis*: it was the Emperor Claudian who, in the year 48, passed the celebrated decree by which public offices and the Senate were thrown open to the inhabitants of *Gallia Comata*. At a later date the title of Roman citizen was given by Caracalla to all the free men of Gaul and the rest of the Empire, which caused a contemporary poet to say of this Emperor:—

"*Urben fecisti quod prius orbis erat.*"

(You have made a city of what was heretofore a world.)

chief city was Trèves, comprised three great dioceses or vicarships, Britain, Spain, and Gaul. The latter was divided for the last time at the beginning of the fourth century, by the Emperor Gratianus, into 17 provinces, containing 120 cities. Each province was governed by an officer of the Empire, and the cities or towns received from the Romans their internal administration and civic organization: they were, in addition, governed by municipal assemblies, called *curiæ*, to which landowners were alone summoned. Occasionally, the deputies of all the provinces met, but these assemblies never had any appointed or regular times of meeting, and they fell into desuetude.

Gaul remained for four centuries subject to the Romans. Everything became Roman there: there were knights and senators, and the druids became priests of the Greek polytheism. There was indubitably a great difference between the civilization of the Northern and Southern Gauls; but the religion,\* the civil laws, the municipal government, and administrative system of Rome prevailed from one end of Gaul to the other. All those who possessed politeness, civilization, learning, or culture, piqued themselves on being Roman. The two nations spoke the same language, and the name of Gallo-Romans bears testimony to their intimate fusion. The old national code of laws disappeared, and in the fifth century there was no trace of Gallic institutions in Gaul.

The Gauls transferred to the arts of peace that intelligent activity which they had for so many years fruitlessly expended in war, and Roman Gaul was for a long time flourishing. The axe cut down the druidic forests, which made way for cultivation, and numerous roads facilitated the progress of commerce and industry. New cities were founded, and those already in existence increased in extent and opulence, rivalling the cities of Gallia Narbonensis. Trèves, Mayence, Cologne, Bordeaux, grew and prospered through the favour of an advantageous situation for trade or war; and Lutetia (Paris), reserved for such great destinies, became the residence of the Cæsars. Most of the Gallic towns were adorned with palaces, statues, thermæ, and triumphal arches. At various points of the Gallic territory may still be seen ruins of Greek art, and imposing

\* Augustus abolished human sacrifices, and only granted the right of citizenship to those who abandoned the druidic rites.

remains of aqueducts, temples, amphitheatres, and other monuments of Roman architecture. Schools, which soon became flourishing, were established in several cities. Those of Lyons, Autun, and Bordeaux acquired a great reputation, and produced grammarians, orators, and poets; but nearly all who distinguished themselves, and, among others, the poets Valerius Cato and Cornelius Gallus,\* and the orators Marcus Cæsar and Domitius Afer, the master of Quintilian, who lived in the age of Augustus, were descended from the Roman colonies of Gallia Narbonensis. Eventually, Gaul prided itself on having produced, in the fourth century, the poet Ausonius of Bordeaux; and, in the fifth, Rutilius Numatianus, and Sidonius Apollinarius, who was a poet and bishop, and whose letters are a precious heirloom for history.

The Emperors imagined they had annihilated druidism by proscribing the druids, abolishing their faith, and declaring all the Gallic gods Roman: but a faith is not destroyed until another has taken its place, and the paganism of Rome had already lost all power over men's minds. What it was unable to do, Christianity effected; and the last druidic altars fell before the new creed in the recesses of the forests. It was introduced into Gaul, toward the middle of the second century, by some priests of the Church of Smyrna, whom the Bishop St. Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostle St. John, sent to preach the Gospel in the Transalpine countries, placing at their head the illustrious Pothinus, first Bishop of Lyons. The pious missionaries settled in the latter city about the year 160, and diffused there the light of the Gospel.

But Rome, while introducing her civilization into Gaul, had, at the same time, introduced her dissolute manners and sanguinary spectacles, dear to the multitude, but against which the Christians forcibly protested by their language and example. They had thus the whole of Pagan society hostile to them; and, amid the bloodthirsty persecutions ordered by the Emperors, no country counted more heroic martyrs than Gaul, and no Church was more fertilized by their blood than that of Lyons. The persecuting edict issued by Marcus Aurelius against the Christians produced the woes of that Church and its glory. The Bishop Pothinus, ninety years of age, was stoned by the people,

\* Valerius Cato, grammarian and poet, was surnamed the Latin Siren. Cornelius Gallus, an elegiac poet, was the friend of Virgil and Augustus.

and died of his wounds; forty-seven confessors perished in the midst of torments, at the hands of the executioner, or were rent asunder by wild beasts.\* St. Irenæus, surnamed the Light of the West, collected at a later date the dispersed members of the Church of Lyons, and the word of Christ was borne into the rest of Gaul, toward the middle of the third century, by seven pious bishops, who, leaving Rome for the most glorious of conquests, proceeded to various points of the Gallic territory, and all of them acquired the crown of martyrdom. Among these the most celebrated was St. Denis, who halted on the banks of the Seine at Lutetia: he was decapitated near that city on the Hill of Mars (Montmartre), and interred in the plain which still bears his name. The work of these holy confessors was successfully resumed in the fourth century by St. Hilarius, Bishop of Poitiers, and by St. Martin of Tours, whose words fructified in the west and centre of Gaul, where Christianity, as everywhere else, was propagated by the very efforts intended to annihilate it.

Gaul, subdued by the civilization of Rome as much as by her arms, was, under the first Emperors, tranquil and resigned. A few daring chiefs, such as Julius Florus in Belgium, and Sacrovir in the Lyonnese, tried in vain to rouse the Gallic tribes to revolt. They found themselves abandoned so soon as they took up arms against Rome, and perished by their own hands. But, eventually, Gaul suffered greatly through the disorders of the Empire and the perpetual revolutions that shook it. No law determined the form of accession to the imperial throne: the armies, scattered about the provinces, frequently arrogated the right of electing the sovereign, and victory decided between them. The Gauls took part in these sanguinary quarrels. Thus, on the death of Nero, being influenced by Aquitanus Vindex, they supported Galba, and afterwards Vitellius. On the death of the latter, they dreamed of regaining their independence. Civilis, aided by the prophecies of the celebrated druidess Velleda, collected under his banners the Batavi, his countrymen, and the Belgæ. A Gaul of the name of

\* The history of the Church has preserved for us the names of the most illustrious martyrs of this glorious epoch. Not one of them surpassed in courage the slave Blandina, a maiden of delicate complexion, on whom the executioner exhausted in vain all the refinements of the most cruel barbarity, and who, when under torture, answered all the efforts of her persecutors with the words, "*I am a Christian.*"

Sabinus assumed the title of Emperor; the druids then emerged from their forests, and announced that the Gallic Empire was about to succeed the Roman. The insurrection spread, and two Roman legions, allowing themselves be led away, marched against Rome. But Vespasian was reigning, and his lieutenants, under his firm and vigilant authority, made the rebellious tribes and legions return to their obedience. Civilis defended for some time longer his independence in Batavia; but Sabinus, conquered, and deserted by all, hid himself in a vault, where his wife, Eponina, who immortalized herself by her conjugal tenderness and her courage, buried herself with him during nine years. Sabinus was at length discovered; and Eponina, in order to save him, embraced the knees of the inexorable Emperor: unable to obtain his pardon, she resolved to follow him to the grave, sharing his punishment, as she had shared, during his life, his prison and his tomb.

For nearly two centuries Gaul served as the battle-field for the generals who contested the Empire. Already the numerous and formidable tribes, formed into a grand confederation in Germany, had tried, on several occasions, to reach the left bank of the Rhine; and occupied, on the frontiers, the principal strength of the Roman armies. In this incessantly returning peril, and in the midst of the general disorder, the ties that connected the provinces to the Empire became daily relaxed; and toward the middle of the third century Gaul made a new effort to detach itself. The legions of the prefecture of Gaul recognized as Emperor, about the year 260, one of their generals, of the name of Posthumus, of Gallic origin, who was assassinated, and had, during thirteen years, several successors, known in history under the name of the Gallic Cæsars. Tetricus, who was the last of these, weary of power and its dangers, betrayed his army, and surrendered himself to the Emperor Aurelian.

After the voluntary fall of the Gallic chief, barbarous hordes rushed upon Gaul, and ravaged it. Devastated by them on the one hand, and, on the other, crushed with taxes imposed by the various candidates to empire, and exhausted of men and money, the Gallic cities at length fell into the most miserable condition. The fields remained sterile, for want of men to cultivate them; commerce perished; and so great was the desolation of these countries, that a

great number of freemen made themselves serfs or slaves in order to escape the obligation of bearing a share of the public burdens. The serfs revolted toward the close of the third century, and, taking up arms under the name of Bagaudes, burned several towns, and devastated the country. Maximian crushed them; but his victory did not restore life to the Gallic nation, for the decaying Empire imparted its own distress to all the nations it had conquered.

Gaul breathed again, however, during a few years, under the protecting administration of Cæsar Constantius Chlorus, who was called to the imperial throne in 305, by the double abdication of Diocletian and Maximian. After him, Constantine, his son, was proclaimed Emperor by the army, and Christianity began its milder reign. Persecution ceased, and this prince, like his father, made great efforts to restore prosperity to the cities of Gaul, and security to its frontiers; but the dissensions which troubled the Empire upon his death drew down fresh calamities upon it. The barbarians drove back the legions entrusted with the defence of the Rhine, as far as the Seine; and terror reigned in the ruined cities of Gaul, until Constantius, the son of Constantine, sent the celebrated Julian, his son, invested with the dignity of Cæsar, to the help of this unhappy country. Julian, by a memorable victory, gained in 357, near Strasburg, over seven Allemannic kings or chiefs, freed Gaul for some time from the presence of the barbarians. He selected as his residence the capital of the Parisians, which he called his dear Lutetia; \* gained the love of the people by his vigilant administration and justice; and employed, with indefatigable ardour, the leisure of peace to repair the ravages of war. But he only offered a temporary remedy for continuous evils, which were too profound to be cured by human hands. Julian himself ascended the imperial throne on the death of Constantius. The period of his elevation to the rank of Augustus was also that of his apostasy. He abjured Christianity, and, in his fury, attempted to destroy it. But the light of the Gospel had already penetrated beyond the Roman world; and Christianity, more powerful than the priests of the Empire, made its irresistible sway felt by the new nations which God had reserved for the over-

\* Paris, called Lutetia, at that period, was almost entirely confined to the Ile de la Cité; but a suburb already ran along the left bank of the Seine: here stood the Palace of the Thermæ, inhabited by Julian, and the ruins of which still exist, and have retained their name.



throw of the Empire. They completed the work of destruction commenced by civil discords, the want of industry, indolence, misery, the cowardice of the multitude, and the corruption of the higher classes. All that was condemned to perish was overthrown by the barbarians; but they stopped before the Christian Church, which they found erect and established, and which subdued themselves.

## IV.

## INVASIONS OF THE BARBARIANS—DESTRUCTION OF THE WESTERN EMPIRE.

406—476.

THE nations that destroyed the Roman Empire were three in number: the Gothic nation,\* the Tartar nation, or Huns, and the Teutonic nation. They were subdivided into a great number of peoples.

These invasions were at the outset neither voluntary nor simultaneous, but solely the consequence of other invasions. Thus, the emigration of the Goths in the second century drove back the Germans on to the frontiers of the Empire; and two hundred years later the arrival of the Huns in Europe forced upon it a portion of the Goths themselves. Up to the Christian era, the Goths and Tartars were unknown to the Romans; but this was not the case with the Teutonic nation, which occupied, so early as three centuries B.C., the vast space contained between the Rhine, the Danube, the Oder, and the German Ocean. All the men of this race called themselves Germans—

\* This great people, whose traces are still visible throughout Europe, had settled on the shores of the Baltic; but were driven thence by the invasion of an Asiatic people led by Odin into the northern countries of Europe toward the second century. The Goths halted on the shores of the Euxine, and there divided into two groups, which derived their name from their geographical position, the *Visigoths*, or western Goths, and the *Ostrogoths*, or Eastern Goths. In the middle of the fourth century the invasion of the Huns into these countries took place. The Visigoths then emigrated, and, casting themselves upon the Roman Empire, did not cease to ravage it till the period when Ataulf, brother of the terrible Alaric, founded in Southern Gaul and Spain the monarchy of the Visigoths (412).

The Ostrogoths, after enduring the yoke of the Huns, went, under Theodorio the Great and with the assent of the Emperor Zeno, to reconquer Italy from the Herulians, and established there, in 493, the kingdom of the Ostrogoths, which perished beneath the blows of Belisarius and Narses in the years between 534 and 553.

A portion of the Goths had remained in the desert. The name of Gepidæ (laggards) was given to them. They were exterminated in the sixth century by the Lombards, at that time their neighbours.

*wehr-männer*, a word in their language signifying men of war. In the end, the general denomination of Germany was applied to all the regions which they occupied. This people, however, had been divided, long prior to the Christian era, into two great factions, the Suevi and the Saxons, who were separated by the Hyrcinian forest, situated in the centre of Germany.\* These were the Germans, who, before invading the Roman Empire, sustained its attacks, for so lengthened a period, in their gloomy forests.

Two great historians, Cæsar and Tacitus, have depicted these barbarians for us. The former shows us a pastoral people living on milk and the flesh of their flocks; with no other worship than that of the stars, without any permanent political government, and led into action by chiefs temporarily elected, who were arbiters of life and death. The most noticeable thing we find in Tacitus, when we seek in his History the deep and imperishable traits that characterized in his day the majority of the German peoples, is a manly feeling of human dignity, and a love of individual independence, tempered in warlike minds by devotion to the chief and respect for noble blood. What in the highest degree attracts attention in their customs is the division of power between the prince and the people, the sanction of the laws by popular assent, and the trial of accused persons by assessors freely elected. Still, these forms of civilization were blended in the Germans with great barbarity; and Tacitus tells us that, as the reward of their services, they received from their chiefs copious repasts and took part in sanguinary orgies; that they only lived for war and the chase, and performed superstitious rites of the most horrible kind, amid the cries of the human victims sacrificed by them on these occasions. Such was the nation destined to expel the Roman conquerors from the soil of Gaul, and to found a new and great people by the admixture of Germanic and Gallic blood.

All the Teutonic tribes did not participate in this work, although

\* The Teutonic people established to the south and west of the Hyrcinian forest, had received the name of Suevi, derived from the verb *schweben*, meaning, to be in motion. The Suevi, in truth, were constantly on the move, and made perpetual efforts to invade neighbouring countries. Those Teutons, on the other hand, who dwelt to the north of the forest, being less nomadic than the others, were known by the name of Saxons, a word derived from *sitzen* (saw in the preterite), to be seated, or at rest. This great division of Germany subsisted up to the second century of the Christian era, the period when the three great Germanic confederations were formed.

many of them invaded Gaul at different points. A small number of clans maintained themselves in the country, after a conquest which was for a long period slow, and limited to the northern frontiers. But before we observe the future masters of Gaul crossing in turn the Yssel, the Rhine and the Meuse, and thus advancing step by step as far as the banks of the Seine, it is important that we should notice the events which, in the second century of the Christian era, had modified the state of the German tribes.

The great emigration of the Goths from north to south had just overthrown central Europe; and a part of the Suevi, expelled by them from the country of the lower Danube, went up toward the sources of that river, between the Hyrcinian forest and the Rhine. This country received from them the name of Suevia or Suabia; they formed there a confederation of the relics of several peoples of different races, who adopted the general title of Allemanica, or collection of men of all descriptions (*Allemänner*). The territory of this southern confederation extended between the Rhine and the Hyrcinian forest, from the Maine up to the Helvetic Alps.

The peoples of Northern Germany, living to the north of the Hyrcinian forest, or the Saxons, were also shaken by the Gothic migration, although their territory remained intact. A part of these tribes, nearest to the Scandinavians, being subjected by the sons of Odin, themselves adopted the Odinic worship: they formed a body under the general denomination of Saxons, and this aggregation was joined by the Angles, who inhabited a country called Anglia, to the south of the Cimbric Chersonese. Such was the origin of the Anglo-Saxons, the future conquerors of Great Britain, who established themselves on the shores of the Elbe, the Baltic, and the German Ocean. Formidable pirates, they spread devastation along the coasts of Gaul, Great Britain, and Spain, as early as the third century.

Pressed between the imperial armies and several powerful confederations of nations of their own race, the Central Germans, settled between the Weser and the Rhine, also recognized the necessity of uniting for the common defence; and, toward the middle of the third century, a new confederation was formed in the countries comprised between the two rivers, under the name of Francs (*Franken*), a German word, whose meaning approaches to that of *ferox*, and

signifies proud and warlike. These tribes, worthy of their name, were in fact the most celebrated among the barbarians for their bravery, and it is from them that the French have derived their name. With the exception of the Frisons, who maintained their independence, they included in their confederation all the peoples established between the Rhine and the Weser, and in this number were the Bructori, the Teucteri, the Chamavi, the Catti, the Angrivarii, and the Sugambri. The Franks are mentioned in history for the first time in the year 241; and a few years later, in 256, a horde of this nation traversed Gaul, crossed the Pyrenees, ravaged Spain, and spread as far as Africa. The Emperor Probus transported a colony of Franks to the shores of the Euxine; but they soon grew weary of their exile, and, seizing a few barks, they audaciously skirted the coasts of Asia, Greece, and Africa, passed between the Pillars of Hercules, faced the perils of the sea, and, following the coast as far as the German Ocean, they re-entered by the mouths of the great rivers the countries whence they originally came.

Thus, in the third century of our era, three formidable confederations closed Germany, from the shores of the Baltic to the sources of the Rhine and the Danube, against the imperial armies and fleets—the Saxons in the north, the Franks in the west, and the Allemanni in the south, while the Goths were encamped on the left bank of the Danube.

All these nations, between which the Roman Empire of the West was eventually divided, did not attack it at the outset with the intention of destroying it. Impelled by violent and irresistible causes to cross its frontiers, they were all eager to have their conquests legitimated by imperial concessions and treaties which incorporated them with the Empire, whose powerful organization and superior civilization filled them with astonishment and admiration. Their kings gladly assumed the Roman titles of patricians, consuls, and chiefs of the militia, dignities with which several of them were invested by the Emperors, as allies of the Empire; and their highest ambition was to be united by marriage with the imperial family.

At this period all the frontiers had received numerous military colonies of barbarians, hired, under the name of *Letes*, for the service of the Imperial Government, which attached them to

it by the concession of lands, called "lotic lands." "The emperors," Procopius tells us, "could not prevent the barbarians entering the provinces; but the barbarians, on their side, did not consider they actually possessed the land they occupied, so long as the fact of their possession had not been changed into right by the imperial authority."

The Franks were among the barbarians who also received great concessions of territory in Gaul long before the epoch assigned to their first invasion by a number of historians. Repulsed from the banks of the Weser by the Saxons, two of the principal tribes of the Frank confederation, the Angrivarii first, and then the Catti, emigrated in the third century, and drew nearer to the banks of the Yssel, the frontier of Batavia. The Romans gave these Franks the name of Salics, or Salii, according to all appearance from that of the Yssel (Isala), on whose banks they had been encamped for a long period.\* This people, by favour of the civil wars and revolts which agitated Northern Gaul at the end of the third century, crossed the river, and established themselves in Batavia. The Emperor Maximian, after attempting to expel them from the Empire, saw that it would be more advantageous to have their help in defending it; and, about the year 587, he allowed the Salic Franks to settle, as military colonists, between the Moselle and the Scheldt, from Trèves (Augusta Trevirorum) as far as Tournay (Turnacum).

A few years later, two other Frank tribes, the Bructeri and Chamavi, crossed the Rhine in order to support the claims of the usurper Carausius to the imperial throne. Constantius Chlorus and

\* Archæologists have supplied different etymologies for the word *Salic*. I have adopted the one which appeared to me most probable. "M. Guerard has proved," says M. de Petigny, "that the *Salic* land was only the globe attached to the manor or house, whose name is *Sal* in all the German dialects, and which, as it could not be divided, did not form part of the inheritance of the daughters." Still, M. de Petigny does not believe, and I agree with him, that we can come to the conclusion that the Salic Franks derived their name from this usage, which was common to them with the other tribes of Germany. "Let us not forget," he says, "that the name of Salii was given them by the Romans: now, the Romans were extremely ignorant of German customs, and would not have sought the designation of a colony of expatriated Germans in a custom which was not even special to them. Is it not more natural to think that the Belgian Franks were called after the name of the country which they had quitted, in order to settle on Roman territory? This country was the right bank of the Yssel, where they had lived for upwards of a century before entering Batavia. The Latin name of the Yssel was *Isala*."

Constantine his son contended against them for a long time, and the Emperor Julian, after conquering them, allowed them to found a military colony between the Rhine and the Meuse. These Franks were called Ripuarii, from the Latin word *ripa*,\* because they settled along the banks of the Rhine, one of the two great rivers which served the Roman Empire as a barrier against the barbarians.

The Salic Franks and Ripuarian Franks occupied nearly the same respective positions in the fifth century.\* At this period the Empire was divided between the sons of the great Theodosius, Honorius reigning at Rome, and Arcadius at Constantinople. Gaul formed part of Honorius's share, and under this weak prince the Western Empire gave way on all sides. A multitude of causes had hastened its dissolution, and anarchy was rampant in the State. The barbarians advanced to plunder that which they were badly paid to defend. In vain Rome humiliated herself so deeply as to become their tributary; endeavouring to stop by presents these fierce men, against whom she could no longer effect anything by her arms, or the majesty of her name: the work of destruction commenced, and in spite of a few fortunate days for the Roman arms, the invading flood never halted till it had swallowed up the Empire, and even Rome herself.

The Suevi and Vandals† burst into Gaul in 406, and from that date up to 476, the epoch when a barbarian chief deposed the last emperor, Italy and Gaul were one vast scene of carnage and desolation, in which twenty nations of different origin came into furious collision.

The Suevi and Vandals were followed by the Visigoths, who, after ravaging one half of the two Empires, and sacking Rome, tore from the Emperor Honorius, who was invested in Ravenna, the concession of the southern territory of Gaul, situated to the west of the Rhone. The Western Empire was dismembered on all sides. The island of Britain had already liberated itself from the yoke of the Romans, and the Armorican provinces of Western Gaul rose

\* Ripuarii a ripa Rheni sic vocatos, et primum a Romanis ad defensionem limitis adversus Germanis constitutos fuisse, nullus dubitat.—*Pref. Eccardi ad Legem Rip.*

† This most barbarous of the barbarous nations was of Slavonic origin. Their hordes wandered about Germany for a while, and eventually joined the Suevi in invading the Empire. After crossing Gaul, the Vandals established themselves in Spain, and in the fifth century passed over to Africa, where Belisarius exterminated them.

in insurrection. About the same period, the Burgundians, a people of Vandal origin, crossed the Rhine, and in 413, founded, on Gallic territory, a first Burgundian kingdom, between Mayence and Strasburg.\* The chroniclers of the eighth century, copied by all subsequent writers, have selected this epoch (418) for a new invasion of the Salic Franks, under a chief whom they have named Pharamond, and whose existence is most uncertain. Contemporary writers did not allude to him; and we have seen the Franks established in the north of Gaul in the third century, where they remained almost stationary up to the fall of the Empire.†

Valentinian III. succeeded Honorius in 424, and reigned in sloth and indolence at Ravenna, to which city the seat of the Western Empire had been transferred. Ætius, who had been brought up as a hostage in the camp of the Visigoth conqueror, Alaric, commanded the Roman armies. This skilful general, the last whom Rome possessed, had fought with success, and had subjugated several barbarous tribes established in Gaul, the Franks, Visigoths, and Burgundians. But at this moment other barbarians poured over that country. The Huns, a Scythian people, the most cruel and savage of all, left the shores of the Euxine and followed Attila. Their multitude was innumerable. Guided by the instinct of destruction, they said of themselves that they were going whither the wrath of God called them. They entered Gaul, and fired and devastated everything before them as far as Orleans. They threatened Paris, and the Parisians attributed the salvation of their city to the prayers of Sainte G  n  vi  ve. Still, the Romans and Visigoths, allied under the command of Ætius and Theodoric,‡ compelled the Huns to retreat: Alaric fell back into Champagne, and

\* *Questions Bourguignonnes*, by Roget de Belloquet. This work, which the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres has crowned, offers opinions as profound as they are ingenious, about the origin and existence of the Burgundians in Germany and Gaul. The author has added a map of the first kingdom of Burgundy.

† Concerning the true or supposed existence of Pharamond, and the authenticity of the passage in the Chronicle of Prosperus, the sole record of the fifth century, in which Pharamond is mentioned, consult the learned and judicious dissertation of M. de Persigny, in his *Etudes sur l'  poque M  rovingienne*.

‡ This Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, and successor of Vallia, must not be confounded with the great Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, who, a few years later, was destined to conquer Italy.

there, near Châlons-sur-Marne, on the Catalaunian plains, a frightful battle took place in the year 451, which was won by Ætius, and followed by a most awful carnage, in which it is said that 300,000 men perished. Merovæus, chief of the Franks, joined the Romans and Visigoths on this sanguinary day, and contributed greatly to their victory by his exploits.

Gaul remained the scene of bloodthirsty struggles between the different tribes that occupied the country, and each moment of repose was followed by a new and frightful crisis. Majorienus, proclaimed emperor in 457, had chosen, as his lieutenant in Gaul and master of the militia, Syagrius Ægidius, who belonged to one of the great families of the country, and was distinguished by the most eminent qualities. The exalted dignity of master of the militia was the object of the ardent ambition of the barbarian chiefs, established in the Empire by the title of colonists, *letes*, or confederates; and the latter respected the person invested with it as the delegate of the Emperor, whose supremacy they recognized. An example of this was seen in the time of Ægidius, in a fact worthy of attention, and which has, for a long time, been misunderstood. Merovæus, king of the Salic Franks, having died in 458, was succeeded by his son Childeric, who was proclaimed king in spite of his extreme youth, and soon afterwards dethroned and expelled by the people who had raised him on the shield. The Franks, no longer possessing a prince of the royal race, voluntarily subjected themselves to the Galló-Roman, Ægidius, master of the militia, and recognized him as their chief. Ægidius, having been declared an enemy of the Empire by the Roman Senate, the Franks recalled Childeric, placed him again at their head, and helped in the overthrow of Ægidius. Childeric, at a later date, was himself invested with the dignity of master of the militia, and fought with glory for the Empire, against the barbarians who were rending it asunder.

The Empire subsisted for a few years longer, a prey to frightful convulsions. On one side were effeminate princes, indifferent to the public calamities, succeeding each other on the throne; chiefs who rose rapidly, and fell as rapidly, by assassination or revolt; an army, composed of a multitude of men of all nations, who recognized no country,



whom cupidity alone attached to the Empire, and who ravaged it, when more was to be gained by pillage than by mercenary service; and an ignorant and wretched people, who knew not what laws to obey, who were exhausted by the Emperors, plundered by the armies and barbarian hordes, and who would have long ceased to be Romans, had they known to whom they could submit with security. On the other side, were new and ferocious nations, whose independent and haughty temper contrasted with the effeminate character of the Romans; tribes which, though differing in manners, language, and worship, as well as origin, seemed to have come to an understanding to hurry from the confines of the world, and rush together on the Empire as their prey.

Between this worn-out society and those new races, the Christian Church rose, acquired strength, and won over a multitude of men, to whom the world only offered suffering, and who eagerly embraced the hope of a happier existence in a better world. The Church received them all into its bosom, without respect of rank or fortune, giving its dignities to the most learned and the most able. The Church alone was, in the West, the depository of some learning; and laboured to produce a new civilization out of the chaos into which Europe threatened to fall. Alone it stood erect and constituted, while everything was crumbling away around it; and when the Roman magistracy disappeared in Gaul, the title of "defender of the city" passed to the bishops, and the ecclesiastical dioceses were everywhere substituted for the imperial dioceses.

The Empire terminated its painful agony between the years 475 and 480. The last prince elected by the Senate of Rome and the Emperor of Constantinople, and who, by this double title, had been legally recognized as Emperor of the West, was Nepos, proclaimed Augustus at Rome in 474. An officer of barbarian origin, Orestes, formerly secretary to Attila, placed by Nepos at the head of the imperial troops, drove him from the throne, compelled him to fly, and raised in his stead a son of his own by his marriage with a Roman lady of illustrious race. This son, named Romulus, was recognized as Emperor by the Senate of Rome; but his election was not confirmed by the Court of Constantinople: he only received the shadow of

power, and was called in contempt by the sobriquet of Augustulus. He was overthrown a year after his election by another barbarian officer of the name of Odoacer.

Gaul, upon the fall of the Empire, was divided between the Visigoths under Euric, in the south; the peoples of Armorica, in the west; the Germans and Burgundians, in the east; and the Franks, in the north. The latter, still divided into two nations, the Salic and the Ripuarian, occupied nearly the same territory they had conquered, and the possession of which had been confirmed to them in the two previous centuries. The Ripuarian Franks, who occupied the two banks of the Rhine, extended on the French side of that river as far as the Scheldt. The Salic Franks occupied, between the Scheldt, the German Ocean, and the Somme, a territory which they had conquered under their King, Clodion, toward the middle of the fifth century. They were divided into three tribes or small kingdoms, the principal cities of which were Tournay (Turnacum), Cambray (Cameracum), and Théroutanne (Therouenna). The chiefs or kings of these tribes all belonged to the royal race of Clodion, and his son Merovæus. The tribe of Tournay had acquired the first rank and predominant influence under King Childeric.

A portion of Gaul, between the Somme and the Loire, had remained Roman, and maintained itself, for some time after the fall of the Empire, independent of the barbarians. This rather extensive country was governed at that time by the Roman general Syagrius, son of the celebrated Ægidius, the ex-master of the imperial militia.

The Anglo-Saxons, at this period, having invaded Great Britain, and established themselves in that island, a great number of the old inhabitants emigrated and settled at the extremity of the western point of Armorica, where they were kindly welcomed by the natives, who had a community of language and origin with them. French Brittany derived its name from these expatriated Britons. About the same period, a colony of Saxons, expelled from Germany, established themselves in Lower Normandy, in the vicinity of Bayeux; while another colony of the same people, hostile to the Britons, occupied a part of Maine and Anjou.

Such was the state of Gaul when, in 481, Clotwig, better known by the name of Clovis,\* son of Childeric, and grandson of Merovig or Merovæus, who gave his name to his dynasty, was elected king or chief of the Salic Franks established at Tournay.

\* Among most of the barbarian nations the proper names of men and women nearly always indicate some distinctive quality. *Merowig* or *Merwig*, is formed of the two words *mer*, great, and *wig*, a warrior. *Clotwig* is derived from *clot*, celebrated, and *wig*, warrior; *Clothild* or *Lothild*, from *lot*, celebrated, and *hild*, a boy or girl. The barbarian names are generally harsh or difficult of pronounciation, and they have been transformed by use into softer names. Thus, for instance, of *Merowig*, the French have made *Merovée*; of *Clotwig* or *Chlodowig*, *Clovis*; of *Brunchild*, *Brunehaut*; of *Theodorik*, *Thierry*; of *Gundbald*, *Gondeband*; of *Karl*, *Charles*; of *Leodgyher*, *Leger*; of *Rodulf*, *Raoul*; of *Attrick*, *Alarie*, &c.



## FIRST EPOCH.

### REIGN OF THE MEROVINGIAN AND CARLOVINGIAN DYNASTIES.

481-986 (FIVE CENTURIES).



## BOOK I.

### GAUL UNDER THE MEROVINGIAN DYNASTY, 481-752.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE REIGN OF CLOVIS.

481-511.

THE success of the Franks in that part of Gaul which had remained subject to the Romans, was partly due to the state of oppression into which the Imperial Government had plunged the people, who, crushed by taxation, impatient to break the yoke, and forced to sustain continual struggles, were yet deficient in resolution and vigour to defend themselves. Other causes favoured their rapid progress in the countries occupied by the Visigoths and Burgundians. These hordes, whose invasion of Gaul had been violent and accompanied by great ravages, had been rapidly softened by the influence of a superior civilization: the Goths, more especially, assumed Roman manners, which were those of the civilized inhabitants of Gaul, and sought to acquire the politeness, arts, and laws of the conquered, whose religion, however, they did not adopt. They were attached to the Arian heresy, while the nations they had conquered were maintained in the orthodox, or Catholic, faith by their bishops. The latter, children of Rome and inheritors of the administrative power of the Roman magistrates, bound to recognize as their pattern and head the bishop of the Eternal City, to regulate their faith by his, and to contribute by the unity of religion to the unity of the Empire, still laboured, at the period of the conquest, to retain under the authority

of Rome, by the bond of religious faith, countries in which the bond of political obedience was severed.

The Visigoths and Burgundians did not recognize the authority of the bishops, who had greater hopes of a nation still pagan and free from prejudices, as the Franks were at that time, than of tribes who, already converted to Christianity, refused to acknowledge their creed or take them as guides. The Goths and Burgundians, besides, at the moment when they were attacked by the Franks, had lost some of their primitive energy, and had made no progress in the military science of the conquered races; but the Franks, on the contrary, had retained all the savage vigour of the inhabitants of Germany, and nothing had softened their natural ferocity, or their spirit of independence. When they were conquered, fresh migrations of Germanic tribes incessantly arrived to repair their losses; when they were conquerors, they had all the superiority which is produced by the boldness of success and the thirst of pillage, peculiar to warlike tribes that have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Clovis, elected chief of the Franks, soon seconded the wish of the bishops of Gaul by espousing Clotilda, daughter of Childeric, king of the Burgundians, the only woman of the Germanic race who at that period belonged to the Catholic communion.

The first enemy he attacked was Syagrius, the Roman general and governor of that part of Gaul still independent of the barbarians, whose capital was Soissons: Syagrius was vanquished, and the Franks extended their limits up to the Seine. Clovis next marched against the hordes of Allemanni, who were invading Gaul to wrest their conquests from the Franks, and fought an action at Tolbiac. Defeated in the early part of the day, he promised to adore the God of Clotilda if he gained the victory: he triumphed, and kept his vow. He was baptized by St. Remi, bishop of the city of that name. "Sicambrian, bow thy head!" the prelate said to him; "burn what thou hast adored, and adore what thou hast burned." Three thousand Frank warriors imitated their chief, and were baptized on the same day: it was thus that the Roman Church gained access to the barbarians. Clovis at once sent presents to Rome, as a symbol of tribute, to the successor of the blessed Apostle Peter, and from this moment his conquests extended over Gaul without bloodshed.



All the cities in the north-west as far as the Loire, and the territory of the Breton *émigrés*, opened their gates to his soldiers. The bishops of the country of the Burgundians soon sent a deputation to the conqueror, supplicating him to deliver them from the rule of the Arian barbarians; and Clovis, on their solicitation, declared war against the Burgundian King Gondebaud, the murderer of Clotilda's father, and made him his tributary. Gondebaud, when conquered, promised to become a convert to Catholicism; and most of the towns on the banks of the Rhine and the Saône were united under the authority of the Church of Rome.

Six years later, Clovis meditated fresh conquests, and turned his attention to the fair southern provinces occupied by the Visigoths. He assembled his warriors on the Field of Mars, and said to them, "I am grieved at the thought that these Arians possess a part of Gaul: let us go, with God's help, and, after conquering them, possess their territory." \* War was at once decided on. Clovis obtained for this expedition the consent of the Eastern Emperor Athanasius, and was supported by the Burgundian King Gondebaud. He negotiated with the Catholic bishops of the provinces occupied by the Visigoths, kept his troops under strict discipline, and offered himself to the Catholic population of the country as a liberator and avenger. Then, marching southward, he terrified Alaric II. by the rapidity of his progress. This prince called to his aid his father-in-law, the great Theodoric, King of the Visigoths, who at that time was governing Italy with glory;† and not daring, before the junction of their armies, to engage in a decisive action with the Franks, retreated before them. Clovis, however, hurrying on, came up with Alaric's army near Vouillé, three leagues to the south of Poitiers, and

\* Gregory of Tours (*Historia Francorum*, I. 2). This work, which contains the annals of Gaul from the year 417 to 591, is one of the most interesting memorials of the national history. It is written in Latin, like all the ecclesiastic MSS. of that period.

† Theodoric had entered into an engagement with the Emperor Zeno to penetrate into Italy, wrest that country from Odoacer, and govern it in the name of the Emperor of the East. He therefore set out with his people, and, in 489, met the army of Odoacer on the banks of the Isonzo. He conquered it, and invaded Lombardy, where Odoacer, after a few successes, followed by numerous reverses, perished by assassination. Theodoric from that time governed Italy wisely, and tried to re-establish there Roman law and civilization.

attacked it. Alaric lost his life in the engagement; the Franks were victorious; and, before long, the greater portion of the country occupied by the Visigoths, as far as the sources of the Garonne, obeyed Clovis. Carcassonne checked his victorious army. A portion of his forces, under the command of his elder son, Thierry, marched into Arvernia (Auvergne), in concert with the army of the King of the Burgundians; and the combined armies subjugated the whole country as far as Arles, the capital of the Visigothic Empire, to which they laid siege. In the meanwhile, the Ostrogoths of the great Theodoric were approaching, and the Franks and Burgundians, retiring before them, raised the siege of Arles and Carcassonne. Peace was finally concluded, after a battle gained by the Ostrogoths. A treaty insured the possession of Aquitaine and Novempopulania (Gascony) to Clovis; Theodoric, as the price of his services, claimed the province of Arles up to the Durance; the Burgundians kept the cities to the north of that city, with the exception of Avignon; and the monarchy of the Visigoths was reduced to Spain and Septimania, of which Narbonne was the capital, having, as its nominal head, a child of the name of Amalaric, son of that Alaric II. who was killed at Vouillé, and grandson and ward of Theodoric. The latter remained, in reality, and up to his death, the absolute sovereign of the two great divisions of the Gothic Empire on either side of the Alps.

The Franks, thus checked in the south by the Ostrogoths, marched westward, and arrived at the country of the Armoricans, whose great towns submitted, and consented to pay tribute: the Breton *émigrés* alone defended the nook of land in which they had taken refuge, and managed to retain their independence.

The campaign in Aquitaine added greatly to the military renown and power of Clovis, who received, at this period, the consular insignia from the Emperor Athanasius, then reigning at Constantinople, and who had approved his expedition against the Goths. Clovis proceeded to Tours in the year 510, in order to inaugurate his consulate in the most venerated sanctuary of Catholic Gaul, in the presence of the tomb of St. Martin. He made his solemn entry into the city on horseback, with a diadem on his head, attired in the chlamys, and scattering gold pieces among the mob: he proceeded in this way from:

the basilica of St. Martin to the cathedral, to thank Heaven for his victories ; and from this day he was called Consul and Augustus.

Clovis, upon this occasion, made considerable donations to the churches of his states, both in money, derived from the immense possessions of the treasury, and lands taken from the imperial domains, which the barbarian kings seized in all the conquered provinces. The basilica of St. Martin obtained the greater share of his liberality, and he even gave to it his war-charger.

On his return from his warlike expedition into Aquitaine, Clovis fixed his residence at Paris, in the ancient Palace of the Thermæ, formerly occupied by the Cæsars. His attention was then turned to the north of Gaul, which was occupied by tribes of his own race, and divided between the puissant kingdom of the Ripeware or Ripuarian Franks, which extended along the two banks of the Rhine, and the kingdom of the Salic, or Salian Franks, who were enclosed between the Scheldt, the Somme, and the sea. Clovis held beneath his authority two-thirds of Gaul ; but was still unrecognized by the tribes of his own nation, with the exception of the Salic tribe of Tournay, at the head of which he had gained all his victories. Tournay, where he had alone succeeded in propagating Christianity, had become an episcopal see. The Salic Franks of the two other kingdoms, Cambray and Therouanne, and the Ripuarian Franks, had remained attached to paganism.

Clovis resolved to subjugate them all. Religion had neither repressed his ambition, nor softened his ferocity ; and he employed cunning and violence to attain success. He had had as his companion in his last exploits, Chlodéric, son of his ally, Sigebert, King of the Ripuarians ; and he inflamed the ambition of the young prince by language as flattering as it was perfidious. Chlodéric, urged to parricide, went to join his father, who was hunting at the time on the right bank of the Rhine, and, surprising him in the wilds of Germany, assassinated him there ; after which he hastened to Cologne, seized the treasury, and had himself proclaimed king. Clovis, constituting himself avenger of the murder he had provoked, procured the assassination of Chlodéric ; and then, setting out with his army, seized Verdun, and penetrated into Cologne. Taking advantage of the stupor into which the loss of their

chiefs, and his sudden march, had plunged the Ripuarians, he affected to be horrified by the crime, and solemnly declared that he was innocent of the blood of Sigebert and Chloderic, whose deaths, he said, would expose the Ripuarians to great evils, unless they accepted his protection, and placed themselves under his laws. His words, backed by the presence of a victorious army, were listened to; and the Ripuarians raised Clovis on the buckler, and proclaimed him their king. He then marched against the Salic tribes of Courtray and Therouanne, whose chiefs, Cararic and Raghenaher, had maintained their independence, and subjugated them, rather by the aid of treachery than by the force of arms. Cararic and his son were surrendered to him without a blow; Raghenaher, deserted on the battle-field, was thrown into fetters by his own soldiers, and his brother Ricaire shared his fate. Both chiefs were brought before the ferocious conqueror. "Unhappy man!" said Clovis to Raghenaher, "dost thou thus dishonour our blood? a Salian allow himself to be chained! was it not better to die?" And, so saying, with one blow of his axe he cut off his head. Then, turning to Ricaire, Clovis said, "Why didst thou not defend thy brother better? he would not have endured this shame;" and, raising his blood-stained axe, laid him also dead at his feet. At the first, he did not prove so terrible in his treatment of Cararic and his son. They promised to enter the Church, and he contented himself with cutting off their hair as a sign of degradation. Cararic, however, unfortunately uttered the imprudent words, "Of what use is it to cut off the foliage of a green tree? it will grow again." These words, revealing a threat, the significance of which Clovis was not slow to comprehend, were a decree of death to father and son: both of them were massacred, as well as another son of Cararic, named Rignomer, who had taken refuge in the city of Mans.

After all these murders, the barbarous king exclaimed, "Wretched man that I am! I have no relations left; all have revolted against me, and all have perished. Is there not any member of my family still in existence to console me in my old days?" This lamentation, the chroniclers say, was only an artifice employed by Clovis in order to assure himself that no scion of his race was left whom he might fear and put out of the way. But this pitiless desire was already fulfilled, and of

all the descendants of Clodion and Merovig, Clovis henceforth remained alone with his children.

If the chroniclers have told the truth in attributing Clovis' lamentations to interested calculation, which they do not condemn, we may be also permitted to believe that remorse had something to do with them. The Church, doubtless, was most indulgent to Clovis, for it was greatly indebted to him; and a portion of the clergy applauded the extermination of princes of the royal blood who were still attached to Paganism.\* Still, such sanguinary deeds struck the people with horror, and the public cry found an echo in the consciences of a few holy priests, and in that of the culprit. Shortly after the murder of Raghenahor and Cararic, Clovis went to Tournay, where the Bishop St. Eleutherus resided, and proceeded to the church to pray. The bishop, who awaited him on the threshold, said, "O King, I know why thou comest to me!" and when Clovis protested that he had nothing to say to the bishop, St. Eleutherus replied, "Speak not so: thou hast sinned and darest not confess it!" At these words the monarch, deeply affected, confessed that he felt himself guilty, shed tears, and begged the pious prelate to implore from Heaven the pardon of his crimes.

Everything in the history of Clovis shows that his religious actions were inspired as much by the ardour of a sincere faith as by policy; and that he carried out his mission as chief and representative of the Catholic party in Gaul, because he was himself attached to the Church of Rome. He constantly mixed up religious undertakings with his warlike expeditions. In the later part of his life he went to Orleans, where he had convened a general council of the bishops of the provinces over which his authority extended. Those of the provinces recently conquered from the Visigoths were present, and one of them, the Bishop of Bordeaux, presided over the council, which cemented an intimate union by mutual concessions between the Catholic clergy and the King of France. Clovis confirmed the gift of immense domains to the Church, which he established on the solid basis of freehold property; he respected the right of asylum in holy places; he recognized the privilege of the clergy to be only

\* *Prosternebat enim quotidie Deus hostes ejus sub manu ipsius et augebat regnum ejus, eo quod ambulabat recto corde coram eo et faciebat quæ placita erant in oculis ejus.*—(*Greg. Tur. Hist., Lib. II.*)

tried by their ecclesiastical superiors, and liberated their property from any seizure by the fiscal authorities. In return for such great concessions, the council decided that no freeman should receive holy orders without the King's permission, and no serf without his master's knowledge. The King limited the right of asylum, prohibited the bishops from excommunicating persons who might plead against them, and, lastly, the assembly submitted all its decisions to the monarch's approval. "We have answered," the bishops said, "the questions on which you have consulted us, and the articles presented to us by you, in order that, if your judgment approve of what we have decided, the decrees passed by so venerable an assembly may be strengthened for the future by the assent of so great a king." \* The council completed its labours by drawing up canons which regulated the administration and division of the property and revenues of the Church, and settled the share of the inferior clergy, schools, the poor, and the infirm.

After the closing of the Council of Orleans, Clovis, on returning to Paris, busied himself with the propagation of Christianity among the Frank tribes which he had recently subjected in Northern Gaul; and it is supposed that the same period should be assigned to the Latin edition which he issued of the Salic law, or, more correctly, of the customs of the Salian Franks, while modifying them so as to render them more in harmony with the new situation which he had made for his people in Gaul.

The work of Clovis was now accomplished, and in the course of the same year (511) he died at Paris, after bestowing fresh largesses on the clergy, and dividing his states between his four sons, Thierry, Clodomir, Childebert, and Clothair, who were all recognized as kings.

In order to form a just estimate of the character of this king we must carry back our thoughts to the age in which he lived. We are bound to remember that there were two men in Clovis—the barbarian chief and the Christian neophyte; and if, on one hand, we are surprised to find in some of his actions so many vestiges of barbarity, we are, on the other, astonished at what he did to elevate his people and himself to a higher stage of belief and civilization. An imposing and terrible grandeur marked his exploits as well as his misdeeds,

\* Concil. Auril., Epist. ad Chlodoveum regem.

He joined to the lively intellect that conceives, the strong and active will that executes ; and God, who allowed him to combine the talents of the warrior with those of the politician, set upon him, at an early age, the seal of the conqueror. He was the instrument employed by Providence to lead the powerful nation of the Franks to Christianity, and to effect the fusion of the barbarous nations with the civilized peoples of the Roman world,—a fusion which could alone be effected by means of religion, and which was not complete until the conquering people had adopted the faith of the conquered. The population of Gaul being subjected to the Church of Rome, Clovis, the disciple of the same Church, was, on that account, better able to subjugate it than were the Arian kings of the Burgundians and Visigoths, who had separated from the Church. He understood his situation and the part he was called on to play. It was, above all, as chief of the religious party and defender of the national faith that he offered himself to the native tribes and Catholic clergy of Gaul: he restored the shaken authority of the Church from the shores of the German Ocean to the Pyrenees, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the forests of Germany. Rome, grateful to Clovis, decreed him the glorious title of "Elder Son of the Church," and he transmitted it to all his successors.

## CHAPTER II.

FROM THE DEATH OF CLOVIS TO THAT OF DAGOBERT I.

-511-638.

## I.

THE CUSTOMS OF THE FRANKS.—STATE OF GAUL UNDER THE MEROVINGIANS.

BEFORE continuing the history of the Franks under the race of Clovis, it will be advisable to take a glance at their religion, laws, and customs, and to explain the relations of the conquerors to the conquered.

Royalty among the Franks was at once elective and hereditary: the title of king, in the German language,\* merely signified chief, and was decreed by election. On the death of a king, the Franks assembled for the purpose of choosing his successor: and we have seen that they chose him from one family, that of Merovig, and that, when they had nominated him, they consecrated him by raising him on a buckler, amid noisy shouts. The chief mission of the ruler they gave themselves was to lead them against the foe, and to pillage: he received the largest share of the booty, frequently consisting of towns with their territory, which constituted the royal domain, and the treasure with which the king recompensed his *antrustions* or *leudes*, the name given to the comrades in arms of the prince, who devoted themselves to his fortunes and swore fidelity to him. These leudes formed a separate class, from which the majority of the officers and magistrates was selected. The following anecdote will instruct us as to what were the limits and extent of the royal power. After the battle of Soissons, Clovis wished to withdraw from the division of the booty a precious vase, claimed by St. Remi. All his warriors consented, except one, who, breaking the vessel with a blow of his

\* *König*, a king, derived from the verb *können*, to be able, or powerful. This word still exists among the Scotch, in the modified form of "canny," while we have perverted it into "cunning."—L. W.



axe, said, brutally, to the King, "Thou shalt only have, like the rest, what chance gives thee!" Clovis concealed his passion; but the following year, while reviewing his troops, he stopped before this soldier, and tore from him his weapon, which, he said, was in a bad condition. "Remember the vase of Soissons!" said the King, and cleft his skull with a blow of the battle-axe.

When a king died, his sons inherited his domain; and being richer than their companions in arms, were in a better position than other persons to secure suffrages. It was thus that the supreme authority was handed down from father to son in the race of Clovis, at first by election, and then by usage, which in time became law.

The sons of Clovis, having all been recognized as kings, each took up his abode in the chief city of his dominions, so that there were from this time four capitals, Paris, Orleans, Soissons, and Reims.\* All these capitals, residences of kings, were chosen to the north of the Loire, in a rather limited space, because the countries in which they were situated were alone considered the land of the Franks. The provinces to the south of the Loire were still filled with reminiscences of the Romans. The great cities, far richer and more populous than those of the north, and brilliant with the relics of imperial grandeur, struck the barbarous Franks with a stupid astonishment. They found themselves uncomfortable amid the ruins of the civilized world, and hence they only sojourned there with repugnance. They left their administration to the municipal bodies and the bishops, and contented themselves with occupying the country by bodies of troops, which kept it in obedience by the terror which they everywhere inspired. The Church was, at that time, the sole power that contended against barbarism, and the only curb on the ferocious passions of the conquerors; who, prior to Clovis, had no other faith but that of the Scandinavian Odin, and had only learned to expect in another life the thoroughly sensual joys of the Walhalla, a palace which they believed to exist in the clouds, and where, blending festivity with combats, they promised themselves, as the supreme felicity after death, to quaff beer or hydromel out of the skulls of their enemies. When, following the example of Clovis, they were converted in a mass to Christianity, without being instructed in it, the majority of them remained igno-

\* Metz was soon after selected as the capital in the place of the last-named city.

rant of that which was sublime and spiritual in the religion they had embraced. Coarse and rude, they required an external faith, which terrified them by carnal menaces, and captivated them by the majesty of its spectacles; and therefore we can easily conceive that Catholicism triumphed over the rival creeds. In fact, the images of saints, the relics of martyrs, the renown of the miracles which were said to be effected by them, and the pomp of the ceremonies, struck the imagination of the barbarians with astonishment and respect. The civil power of the bishops; the external and visible hierarchy of the clergy, whose head was at Rome, in the Eternal City; and, above all, the great name of Rome, respected even by her conquerors, gave the Catholic clergy a power over this untameable population, far greater than the priests of any other Christian Church could have obtained. The clergy, besides, were distinguished at this time by great virtues, and made energetic efforts to combat the unbridled passions of the people and the kings. The barbarism was, however, still so great that men treated God as they would have liked themselves to be treated, hoping to disarm His justice and turn away His wrath by giving Him gold, jewels, horses, and estates, with which they enriched the Church, and enabled the clergy to maintain their necessary ascendancy over the converted conquerors.

At the moment when the Franks invaded Gaul, there were numerous monasteries in that country, the most ancient of which was Marmoutiers, near Tours, founded by St. Martin, who introduced cenobitic life into Gaul. The following ages witnessed the foundation of a great number of other pious establishments, among the most useful of which we may distinguish those of the illustrious order of the Benedictines, founded in Italy in the sixth century by St. Benedict, and which soon spread its numerous ramifications over the whole of Europe. The adepts of this order were subjected to the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience; and St. Benedict had also prescribed for them prayer, study, manual labour, and the instruction of youth. No religious order contributed more than this one to the progress of letters and the sciences. It was necessary, amid the perpetual scenes of fighting, pillage, and crime, that the unhappy should find somewhere an asylum against violence; and when the soil was bristling with armed men, whose only thought was to destroy each other, it was important that

large associations, animated by a pious and intelligent zeal, should devote themselves to the fatiguing task of draining marshes, clearing land, collecting the information contained in the scattered manuscripts which had escaped so many devastations, and in opening schools, and handing down to posterity the knowledge of contemporary facts. Such was the laudable occupation of the first inhabitants of monasteries, and it was thus that they deserved the respect and gratitude of the nations.

The authority of the kings was purely military, and the legislative power belonged to the entire nation of the Franks, who assembled under arms in the month of March or May, whence these *malls*, or national *comitia*, have been entitled "the assemblies of the field of March" and "the field of May." They took place regularly every year in the early period of the conquest; but when the Franks, after becoming landowners, were rapidly scattered over the soil of Gaul, they neglected to assemble, the kings ceased to convoke them regularly, and the legislative power passed into the hands of the monarchs, their officers, and the bishops. Each city was administered by its own municipality, under the direction of the bishop, who was elected by the people and the clergy of his diocese.

Justice emanated from the people. All the freemen in each district, designated by the name of *armans* or *rachimbourgs*, had the right of being present at the courts, where they performed the duties of judges, under the presidency of the royal officers, men, counts, or centurions. No subordination existed between the several courts, and no appeal was admitted. Each of the tribes that occupied the soil of Gaul retained its own laws. The Gallo-Romans continued to be governed, in their civil relations, by the Theodosian code; \* the Salian and Ripuarian Franks and the Burgundians each had a special code.

The law which the Salic Franks obeyed, and which obtained from them the name of the *Salic law*, was not drawn up till after the conquest; but it was based on maxims long anterior to the invasion of Gaul by the Franks. This law, moreover, established offensive distinctions between the races of the Franks and Gallo-Romans. The reparation for the heaviest crimes was estimated in

\* This was the name given to the collection of Roman laws drawn up by order of the Emperor Theodoric II., and promulgated in 438. This was the first official code.

money; and, by consenting to pay a certain sum, any man could with impunity commit robbery, murder, or arson. In this species of composition the law always valued the life of a Frank at double that of a Roman. Churchmen, however, were respected, and enjoyed several privileges. Under the sons of Clovis, the penal laws became more severe, and the penalty of death was substituted in certain cases for fines. The law of the Ripuarian Franks, promulgated by Thierry I., established compensation for offences on principles similar to those of the Salic law. The law of the Burgundians, called the *loi Gombette*, after Gondebaud, its first author, was more favourable to the old inhabitants than the laws of the Salic and Ripuarian Franks; and, resembling in this point the law of the Visigoths, it established no distinction between the Romans and the conquerors, for crimes committed on the person.

All the laws of the barbarians prove that these nations had an unbounded faith in the immediate and constant intervention of the Divinity in human interests. Some established as judicial proof the oath of the friends and relatives of the accused person or the debtor; others the issue of a duel between the parties; while others, again, prescribed the ordeal of fire and water. The accused was obliged to seize a red-hot iron bar, or plunge his hand into boiling water: his arm was then carefully wrapped up, and, at the expiration of a certain number of days, if the burn left traces the unhappy man was punished as guilty; but, if no traces were left, his innocence was proclaimed. They believed that the judgment of God Himself was thus obtained, just as it was by the duel.

In Gaul, after the conquest, a distinction was made between the freemen (possessors of independent estates or owners of benefices) the colonists, and the slaves or serfs. The first among the freemen, whether Franks or Gallo-Romans, were the *leudes*, or companions of the kings, and possessors of the royal favour; after the freemen, or owners of the soil, came the colonists, who cultivated it in consideration of rent or tribute; and, lastly, the serfs, some of whom were attached to the person of the master, and others to the soil, with which they were sold and handed over like cattle.

The clergy, as we have seen, formed a separate and very powerful class. All the public offices which, to be properly filled, required

learning and knowledge, were given to the clerks or churchmen, owing to their superior instruction ; and in this way they found means to increase the wealth which they derived from the liberality and piety of the faithful.

The territorial estates were divided, among the barbarians, into two chief classes, *allodia*, and *benefices*, or *fiefs*. The *allodia* were estates free from any charge, and belonging entirely either to the conquerors or the conquered among the Franks : by virtue of the Salic law, they could not be inherited by females. The *benefices* were lands which the kings detached from the royal domain in order to reward their *leudes*. The possession of *benefices* entailed the obligation of military service ; and, being only held for life, they could be recalled. The offices of dukes and counts, possessed by the first lords, were not transmissible by right of inheritance to their children. But, after a time, the bravest warriors, enriched by the royal favour, formed a dangerous aristocracy : they became more powerful in proportion as the royal authority grew weaker, and, their claims having increased with their power, they rendered their domains and titles hereditary in their families. This usurpation on the part of the nobles was one of the principal causes of the downfall of the Merovingian dynasty.

## II.

### GAUL UNDER THE SONS OF CLOVIS.

FRATRICIDAL wars and frightful crimes marked the reign of the descendants of Clovis. The sons of that prince divided his states among them with barbarous ignorance, and this clumsy division was the source of sanguinary quarrels.

Thierry resided at Metz, the capital of Eastern France ; Clothair at Soissons ; Childebert at Paris ; and Clodomir at Orleans. The last three also shared among them the lands and cities conquered in Aquitaine. At this period a great number of German tribes formed an alliance with the Franks, whose confederation extended to the Elbe. The Frisons, Saxons, and Bavarians were included in this league ; the Thuringians, allied with the Varnians and Herules, had spread along the banks of the Elbe and the Neckar, where they had formed a new monarchy. Sullied with fearful atrocities, they resisted the

Franks, who marched against them under Thierry and Clothair, and defeated them in two battles, assassinated the Thuringian princes, put a part of the nation to the sword, and attached Thuringia to the monarchy of the Franks.

Sigismund, son of Gondebaud, who assassinated Chilperic, the father of Queen Clotilda, was reigning at this time in Burgundy. Forty years had elapsed since the murder, but the widow of Clovis swore to take vengeance for it, although the murderer was no longer in existence. She resolved to make the son expiate the father's crime; and, collecting her sons together, she made them promise to avenge the death of Chilperic, their grandfather. Clodomir and Clothair at once entered Burgundy, gained a battle, made King Sigismund a prisoner, and threw him down a well with his wife and children. Gondemar, brother of the conquered king, became his avenger. He defeated Clodomir's army at Véséronce, on the banks of the Rhone, killed Clodomir, expelled the Franks, and was recognized as king by the Burgundians, over whom he reigned till the year 532. Clothair and his brother Childebert then attacked him, conquered him, and took possession of the kingdom.

These two princes sullied their character by a frightful crime after the death of their brother Clodomir, King of Orleans, who had left three children of tender age, who were being brought up by their grandmother Clotilda. Clothair and Childebert coveted the inheritance of their nephews; and, in order to get them into their power, promised to have them crowned. The children went in high glee to join their uncles, followed by their servants and tutors; but all at once, they were separated from them, and the servants were thrown into dungeons. Clothair and Childebert then sent to Clotilda, their mother, a pair of scissors and a dagger—directing her to choose between a monastery and death for her grandchildren. "Sooner death!" replied the heart-broken woman. The kings, on receiving this answer, proceeded straight to their nephews. Clothair murdered two of them with his own hands, and their servants were also massacred. The third son of Clodomir, of the name of Clodoald, escaped from the fury of his uncles, became a monk, and founded the monastery of St. Clodoald (Saint Cloud).

Thierry I., the eldest of the sons of Clovis, died in 534, after

ravaging Auvergne, which had tried to shake off his yoke. His son, Theodebert, succeeded him.

The empire of the Goths was at this period beginning to decline. The great Theodoric was no longer alive. This prince had governed Italy, Spain, and Southern Gaul: he had reconquered from the Franks a large portion of the provinces taken from the Visigoths after the battle of Vouillé, and had striven to re-establish in his states the laws, customs, and manners of the Roman Empire; but he had no son to whom to hand down his immense kingdom. He had only two daughters, Amalasontha and Theodegotha, and by them two grandsons, Athalaric and Amalaric, between whom he divided his empire. Athalaric had the kingdom of the Ostrogoths in Italy, with the provinces of Gaul up to the Rhone and the Durance. Amalaric, the son of Alaric II., and Theodegotha, reigned over the Visigoths in Spain and Gaul, from the base of the Pyrenees as far as the Lot and the Rhone. This prince resided at Narbonne, and espoused Clotilda, daughter of Clovis. Clotilda was a Catholic among an Arian people. Outraged by the populace, she was treated still more cruelly by her husband. Her blood flowed: she staunched it with a veil, and a faithful servant conveyed to the Frank kings this blood-stained veil as an appeal to their vengeance. Inflamed with fury at the sight, Childebert set out, and led an army of Franks to the frontier of Septimania,\* where he defeated the Visigoths. Amalaric fled in terror to Barcelona, and perished there by assassination. Childebert gave up Narbonne to pillage, and then returned to Paris, loaded with the spoils of the rich province; but as he neglected to secure the possession, it reverted to the Visigoths eventually. The Franks, a few years later, crossed the Alps, and advanced into Spain, as far as Saragossa. This fortress arrested them, and they recrossed the mountains, without obtaining any serious or durable result from the expedition.

The race of Theodoric ceased, at about the same period, to reign in Italy, where his grandson Athalaric died young. The Ostrogoths, after his death, and that of his successor, Theodatus, the second husband of his mother, Amalasontha, selected as their ruler Vitiges, the most skilful of their generals. They were at that time engaged in a war

\* The name of Septimania was beginning to prevail over that of Narboneusis Prima, given by the Romans to the country which was afterwards called Languedoc.

with Justinian, the Emperor of the East, who asked the support of the Frank king, Theodebert I., son of Thierry I., against the Ostrogoths. Theodebert, equally appealed to by the latter to help them against Justinian, passed the Alps at the head of a numerous army, and received gold from both sides : then, breaking his engagements, he made a frightful carnage of both armies, ravaged Lombardy with fire and sword, burned Genoa and Pavia, and extorted Provence from the Ostrogoths ; whose empire, already tottering, finally succumbed beneath the attacks of Belisarius and Narses, the illustrious generals of Justinian.

Theodebert was meditating an invasion of the Empire of the East, when he died in 548, leaving the throne to his son Theodobald, who only reigned seven years. On the death of the latter, Clothair, his great-uncle, seized his kingdom : his other grand-uncle, Childebert, jealous of this usurpation, set up against Clothair his son Chrammus, and at first supported him with his army, but himself soon fell ill at Paris and died. Clothair inherited his kingdom, pursued his own rebellious son, and had him burned alive, with his wife and daughters. He had now succeeded his three elder brothers, and held under his sway the whole of Roman Gaul, in which were comprised Savoy, Switzerland, the Rhenish provinces, and Belgium. Septimania alone remained to the Visigoths : Clothair's authority extended beyond the Rhine, over the Duchies of Germany, Thuringia, and Bavaria, and the countries of the Saxons and Frisons. He made no use of this colossal power, and the only memorial that remained of the two years during which he governed the monarchy of France alone, was the murder of his son. Clothair was taken ill a year after this horrible execution, and, amazed at the approach of death, exclaimed, " Who is this King of Heaven who thus kills the great kings of the earth ? "

This princely murderer of his family had among his wives a princess of the name of Radegonde, daughter of the last King of Thuringia, who, owing to her rare education and holy and noble life, presents, on the throne, a remarkable contrast to the barbarous manners and almost general ignorance of her age. Having voluntarily left the royal residence for a cloister, she founded near Poitiers the celebrated convent of Saint Croix, where she divided her leisure between the cultivation of letters and the duties of piety and un-



bounded charity. She died there in 589, and her tomb may still be seen.\*

### III.

#### GAUL UNDER THE GRANDSONS OF CLOTHAIR I.—RIVALRY OF FREDEGONDE AND BRUNHILDA.—EPISODE OF GONDEVALD.

CLOTHAIR I. left four sons—Caribert, Gontran, Chilperic, and Sigebert—who divided his states among them. Caribert lived but a short while, and left no male child: from his death dates a fresh division between the three surviving brothers, which it is important to understand thoroughly. The vast country situated between the Rhine and the Loire was divided in two, as if a diagonal line were drawn from north to south, from the mouths of the Scheldt to the environs of Langres, near the sources of the Saône; the part situated to the west of this line was named Neustria (Neuster: west)—and the other part, to the east, was named Austrasia (Ostro: east). Neustria fell, in the partition, to Chilperic, and Austrasia to Sigebert. Burgundy formed the third great division of Gaul, and fell to the share of Gontran. Vast countries, afterwards conquered, were regarded as appendices of the Frank Empire, and it was arranged that a separate division should be made of them: these were Provence, Aquitaine, and Gascony. The first was attached to Eastern France, Austrasia and Burgundy, and was divided between Sigebert and Gontran; the second was divided into three parts, reputed equal, each of which formed a small Aquitaine; and lastly, Gascony was divided between Chilperic and Sigebert, to the exclusion of Gontran. The German provinces, governed by dukes nominated by the kings, were scarce taken into consideration in this division; they were allotted, with Austrasia, to Sigebert, who, in order to watch over them better, transferred his residence from Reims to Metz, which he made his capital. The three brothers made a strange convention with regard to the city of Paris: owing to its importance, they promised that neither should enter it without the consent of his brothers. This celebrated division of the inheritance of Clothair I. was made in the year 567, and from this

\* We refer our readers to the interesting history of Sainte Radegonde in M. Augustin Thierry's charming *Récits Mérovingiens*.

moment commenced the long and bloody rivalry between Neustria and Austrasia.

Chilperic and Sigebert distinguished themselves by their fratricidal hatred; and were surpassed in audacity, ambition, and barbarity, by their wives, whose names acquired a great and melancholy celebrity.

Sigebert had married Brunhilda, daughter of the King of the Visigoths; and Chilperic, surnamed the Nero of France, jealous of the alliance contracted by his brother, put aside the claims of his mistress, Fredegonde, in order to espouse Galswintha, sister of Brunhilda. He had, at this period, three sons by his first wife Andovera, whom he repudiated, and imprisoned at Rouen. Shortly after his second marriage, he had Galswintha strangled, at the instigation of Fredegonde, and took the latter for his wife. Brunhilda swore to avenge her sister, and the enmity of the two queens caused streams of blood to flow.

After an unsuccessful war against his brother Sigebert, the King of Neustria submitted, asked for peace, and accepted a treaty, which he violated almost immediately afterwards by taking up arms again. Sigebert marched on Paris, which city Chilperic had seized, laid the environs of the city waste, took it by storm, and forced his brother to shut himself up in Tournay with his wife and children. The Austrasian army invested the latter town, and Sigebert declared that he would kill Chilperic; but he wished first to have himself elected King of Neustria, and designated for this solemnity the royal domain of Vitry, near Douai. Germainus,\* Bishop of Paris, tried in vain to move Sigebert by exciting the pity of Queen Brunhilda, who was even more ardent for vengeance than her husband. He addressed the King himself in these words: "King Sigebert, if thou wilt renounce the thought of killing thy brother, thou shalt be victorious; if thou hast another thought, thou shalt die." Sigebert persisted in his fratricidal projects. He proceeded to Vitry, where he was raised on the buckler, and proclaimed King of Neustria in the assembly of the Franks; but, in the midst of the rejoicings, two young emissaries of Fredegonde stabbed the King with poisoned knives. He died, and his army dispersed: Chilperic regained his crown and Paris, into which city he entered as a victor.

\* The Church canonized him, and he is known by the name of St. Germain.

The widow of the assassinated King Sigebert, Brunhilda, was still in that city with her two daughters and her youthful son, Childebert. By order of Chilperic she was arrested and kept as a prisoner, with her children, in the old imperial Palace of the Thermæ; but Gondobaud, an Austrasian noble, contrived the escape of young Childebert. The royal child was let down in a basket from a window of the palace; and a faithful servant placed him behind him on a horse, and carried him to Metz, where Childebert II. was proclaimed King of Austrasia in 575.

King Chilperic then sent Brunhilda, with her two daughters, in exile to Rouen, where she was joined by Merovic, the son of Chilperic and the unfortunate Andovera, and himself exposed to the furious hatred of his formidable mother-in-law, Fredegonde. Merovic conceived a violent passion for Brunhilda, which she returned; and they asked for the nuptial blessing at the hands of Bishop Pretextatus, who united them in secret, and thus drew down on himself the implacable vengeance of Fredegonde. Chilperic, speedily informed of the marriage, took umbrage at it, and hastened to Rouen, where he separated the couple. Brunhilda regained her liberty, and fled into Austrasia; but Merovic was arrested by his father's orders, underwent the tonsure; was ordained priest, in spite of his protests, and in defiance of the canons of the Church, and exiled to the monastery of St. Calais, near Mans. While being taken by an armed body to the place of his exile, Merovic, escaping from his guardians, took refuge in the Basilica of St. Martin of Tours, where the celebrated Bishop Gregory at that time occupied the episcopal see. The right of asylum in churches was, in this utterly barbarous age, the sole safeguard of the oppressed against the violence of the princes. Bishop Gregory maintained this dangerous right in all its rigour, and dared, for a long time, to defend Merovic against his father's arms; but the young prince at length grew weary of his voluntary seclusion in a church, and, quitting it, with an escort of horsemen, he tried to join his wife, Queen Brunhilda, in Austrasia. But the latter, during the minority of the youthful Childebert, her son, was herself living with him under the formidable guardianship of the Austrasian leudes; and was powerless to protect her husband against them. They repulsed Merovic, and the fugitive prince was constrained to continue

his vagabond route through Neustrian Gaul, pursued by the implacable anger of his father and Fredegonde. At length, surrounded on all sides, and on the point of falling into their hands, he committed suicide, and his servants perished in frightful tortures. Fredegonde was not, however, sufficiently avenged; and her fury fell even upon the prelate who had dared to bestow the nuptial blessing. The Metropolitan of Rouen, Pretextatus, was, in her eyes, guilty of a crime, and she had him assassinated at the foot of the altar. Only one child, of the name of Clovis, by Chilperic's first marriage, survived Merovic. Fredegonde conspired his ruin. She accused him of witchcraft and casting spells on her own children: his young wife was handed over to the hangman, and Clovis was stabbed to death at Noisy.

Nothing checked the Merovingian princes in the transports of their unregulated passions and fury: as barbarians, who had attained the enjoyment of Roman luxuries and civilization before they had put off their savage instincts, they set no bounds to their desires, and the premature end of their race could be foreseen. One day, when Chilperic was residing at his palace of Braine, two Gallic bishops, Salvius of Alby, and Gregory of Tours, were walking together round the palace: suddenly Salvius stopped, and said to Gregory, "Dost thou see anything over this building?"

The Bishop of Tours replied, "I see the belvedere which the King is having built."

"Dost thou not perceive something else?"

"No! but if thou seest aught, tell it to me!"

Salvius sighed, and continued, "I see the sword of the wrath of God suspended over the house."

Chilperic, after his re-establishment on the throne, set no bounds on his ambition and cupidity. He invaded the states of his brother Gontran during a war that prince was waging against the Lombards, and was supported in his aggression by the people of Aquitaine, a portion of whom were the subjects of Gontran. An army of Aquitanians, under the command of Didier, Count of Toulouse, marched upon Burgundy; but Gontran had, as leader of his troops, a great captain, the Patrician\* Mummoles; who, after exterminating the

\* The Patrician was, after the King, the first dignitary among the Burgundians.

Lombards, attacked the Aquitanians, destroyed their army, and recaptured all the places which Chilperic had seized. Six years later, a new invasion of the Neustrians into Burgundy was repulsed, and Chilperic perished soon after, being assassinated in the forest of Chelles by the orders of Fredegonde. Of all the male children he had by this sanguinary woman, only one, a child of the name of Clothair, survived him. His mother undertook the guardianship of him, and, being menaced simultaneously by all the enemies whom her crimes had aroused against her, she placed herself, with her son, under the protection of King Gontran, the best—or, speaking more correctly, the least cruel—of the sons of Clothair I., and who was surnamed “the Good,” less on account of his merits, than from a comparison with the other princes of his race.

Brunhilda was at this period disputing the guardianship of her young son, Childebert II., with the nobles of Austrasia. She united to a vast and active genius indomitable passions, and wished at once to punish Fredegonde, her rival, and retain her authority over the Austrasians, who, neighbours of Germany, the cradle of their ancestors, were the most undisciplined nation in Gaul. Brunhilda was fond of Roman civilization: she desired to establish in her son's states the centralization of the monarchical power, and the system of the Roman government in levying the public imposts. But the Austrasian nobles endured with impatience the yoke of the royal authority; the Roman system of taxation was especially odious to them; and they regarded imposts as a disgraceful tribute which should only be paid by the vanquished: they, therefore, formed a league against Brunhilda, and became her most dangerous enemies. The Frank kings had, up to this time, been accustomed to set one of their leudes over the officers of their house, as steward of the royal domains: this officer, who had the title of majordomo, was at a later date called “mayor of the palace of the kings,” and was merely their first domestic. But, after the death of Sigebert, the Austrasian nobles, jealous of Brunhilda's authority, elected one of their number mayor of the palace; and added to his functions that of presiding over them and watching the youthful King. Brunhilda tried in vain to oppose the haughty aristocracy, who claimed a share in the guardianship of her son: she

therefore restrained herself till Childebert was of the age to govern by himself, and inspired him with a profound dissimulation.

It was not alone in Austrasia that a reaction was visible against the descendants of Merovic. Royalty was no longer in Gaul what it had formerly been in the savage forests of Germany. A multitude of causes had concurred to produce this change: the conquest of vast countries; the possession of numerous domains and large treasures, the fruit of immense spoils; the rarity of the national meetings, owing to the dispersion of the conquerors over the land; and, lastly, the traditions of the majesty of the Roman Empire and the absolute power of the Emperor,—all this fed the ambition of the descendants of Clovis. They believed themselves the legitimate successors of the Cæsars, and gradually usurped an arbitrary and despotic authority over their own comrades in arms and the Frank aristocracy.

The aristocracy resisted; they had lost their strength by becoming dispersed, and re-acquired it by becoming landowners. Hitherto floating, they had become fixed; they had acquired perpetuity with property: a multitude of freemen resorted to them for their support against the exactions of the treasury and royal officers; and this patronage spread in spite of the prohibitions of the kings. The Church itself, though it had at first favoured the progress of the royal authority, grew weary of a despotism which no longer respected its immunities and privileges, and the bishops leagued themselves with the principal leudes.

A formidable conspiracy was entered into against the Kings of Austrasia and Burgundy. The aristocracy desired a king who would be a passive instrument in their hands, and turned their attention to a natural and unrecognized son of Clothair I., of the name of Gondevald. The latter, fearing the suspicious jealousy of the kings his brothers, had sought a refuge at Constantinople, at the court of the Emperor Maurice. No other man was better adapted, by his name and character, to serve the projects of the ambitious nobles of Gaul. An Austrasian lord, whom his treachery has rendered shamefully celebrated, Gontran Boson, was sent by the leudes of Burgundy and Austrasia to Gondevald, to seduce him by the lure of a brilliant share of the inheritance of Clothair I., his father. He at the same time

flattered the Emperor Maurice with the hope of recovering a portion of his imperial rights over Gaul by favouring the enterprise of Gondevald; and the latter quitted Constantinople with immense wealth which he received as a present from the Emperor. But the treasures which, in his idea, were destined to aid his success, paved the way for his ruin. They tempted the cupidity of the traitor Boson, who stole them, and, returning to Austrasia, purchased his pardon of King Childebert.

Gondevald, however, was enthusiastically received in the south of Gaul. The Aquitanians and Provençaux, among whom Roman civilization had been best preserved, impatiently endured the barbarous yoke of the Franks; and, attempting to liberate themselves after the death of Chilperic, the insurrection spread the furthest in those parts of Aquitaine subjected to the Kings of Neustria and Burgundy. The most powerful men in those countries espoused the cause of Gondevald; and he had at the head of his armies Didier, Duke of Toulouse, Bladast, Duke of Bordeaux, and the famous Patrician Mummoles, who, formerly a general of Gontran, had become his enemy. Gondevald announced himself as heir of Clothair I. in those parts of Aquitaine dependent on Neustria and Burgundy; but he respected the claims of Childebert II. in Austrasian Aquitaine. Bordeaux, Toulouse, and other large towns, opened their gates to Gondevald, and the larger portion of Gaul to the south of the Loire was gained over or conquered. Deputies then proceeded to King Gontran, and summoned him to give Gondevald the share of the kingdom belonging to him; "otherwise," they said, "he will come with his army, fight with you, and God will judge whether he is the son of Clothair or not." Gontran, in answer, had them tortured; but, terrified by the progress of the revolution, he invited his nephew Childebert II. to join him against Gondevald, and drew him into the alliance by adopting him as his heir.

On the approach of the formidable armies of Burgundy and Austrasia, defections commenced in Aquitaine, Duke Didier setting the example. Gondevald, abandoned by a great portion of the Aquitanians, was compelled to seek a refuge in the town of Comminges, where he shut himself up with Mummoles, and a band of valiant warriors. This town, built on a scarped rock, was defended by nature, by formidable ramparts, and above all by the genius of

the invincible Mummoles. The besiegers saw that they could not subdue the victor of the Lombards by force of arms, and after uselessly employing force, they attempted successfully to seduce him. Mummoles promised to deliver up Gondevald; and, proceeding with the principal chiefs to the prince, said to him, "Leave the city, go to your brother, and be not afraid." Gondevald saw that he was lost; and replied, with a torrent of tears, "I came to Gaul on your entreaties. I came with immense treasures: they have been taken from me; and, excepting the aid of Heaven, I placed all my hopes in you. Let God be the judge between you and me!"

Mummoles and the chiefs were inflexible. They led Gondevald out of the town, and surrendered him to Ollon, Count of Bourges, and to Gontran Boson, who had despoiled him of his treasures. "Eternal Judge!" exclaimed the unfortunate prince, "Avenger of innocence! avenge me on those who have surrendered me, an innocent man, to my enemies!" He went toward the army of the besiegers, arrayed on the plain. "Here," said Count Ollon, "is the man who calls himself the son and brother of kings!" and, at the same moment, he ran his spear through him. Endeavouring to rise, he was hurled down again, and killed by a fragment of rock thrown by Boson. Thus perished Gondevald, after a harsh experience of the inconstancy of men, and the most extreme vicissitudes of fortune.

This treachery was of no advantage to the traitors. The Austro-Burgundian army penetrated into the town, which they fired; and inhabitants, priests, and soldiers all perished, by the sword, or by fire. Mummoles was not spared: his rebellion had effaced his services, and Gontran ordered that he should be put to death. This powerful chief perished by assassination, in the midst of the army which had gained the victory solely through him; and with him vanished the great conspiracy which had made the King of Burgundy tremble on his throne. Shortly afterwards, at an assembly held at Andelot, the traitor Gontran Boson was condemned by the two Kings, and a price set on his head. The house of a bishop, in which the proscribed man had taken refuge, was burnt like the lair of a wild beast. Boson came out of it, sword in hand, and expired on the threshold, transfixed by a cloud of arrows: when dead, he stood erect, fixed to the wall. Such was the mode in which royal decrees were carried out:



acts of justice were not distinguished from those of violence ; but were as barbarously executed as the crimes they were intended to punish.

The two princes, uncle and nephew, then formed a new compact in the solemn assembly of Andelot. The common interests of the kingdoms of Burgundy and Austrasia were regulated there, and the survivor of the two Kings was recognized as the heir of the other. After this, King Childebert, encouraged by his successes in Aquitaine, the support of Gontran, and the genius of his mother, Brunhilda, shook off the yoke of his leudes, and put several of them to death. A conspiracy against his life was detected. A powerful lord, the ferocious Rauking, who had agreed to kill him with his own hand, was summoned to the presence of Childebert, and found him surrounded by his guards : the King had the intended assassin killed in his presence. On another occasion, he invited his court, and Magnovald, the most formidable of the nobles, to witness a combat of animals, and while the bull was expiring in the arena, a warrior cleft the head of Magnovald with his axe.

While the youthful Childebert was signaling his reign in Austrasia by bloodthirsty acts, old King Gontran was terminating his in Burgundy by reverses. His armies were defeated in Septimania, or Languedoc, by the Visigoths, and fell back in Novempopulania before the Vascons, the ferocious mountaineers of the Pyrenees. The old King died in 593, and Childebert, his nephew and adopted son, succeeded him. By his succession to the throne of Gontran the strength of Austrasia was doubled ; and Queen Brunhilda, thinking the moment favourable to avenge herself on her old enemy, the Austrasian army marched against Neustria, where the youthful Clothair II. reigned, under the direction of his mother, Fredegondo, and Landeric, mayor of the palace. Fredegondo anticipated her rival. She occupied Soissons, and offered battle in the plains of Truccia, near Château Thierry. Childebert's army was suddenly seized with a panic at the sight of a moving forest apparently marching against them. It was the Neustrian army, the soldiers of which carried in front of them leafy branches, for the purpose of concealing their numbers. The Austrasians took to flight, and Childebert accepted a peace, which could only be a short truce. He survived his defeat only a few years, and died, after undertaking some

other warlike expeditions, in 596, leaving two sons of tender age, Theodebert and Thierry.

At this time the three kingdoms of the Franks recognized as Kings three boys. Clothair II. reigned in Neustria, Theodebert II. in Austrasia, and Thierry II. in Burgundy—the first under the guardianship of Fredegonde, the two others under that of their grandmother Brunhilda. The implacable hatred of these two queens rekindled hostilities; and in a great battle fought at Latofao, near Sens, by Fredegonde and Landeric, against the sons of Childebert, the Austrasians and Burgundians took to flight. Fredegonde entered Paris victoriously; reconstituted the old kingdom of Neustria in its integrity; and died, after triumphing over all her enemies, either by the sword or by poison.

The enterprises of Brunhilda were much more difficult than those of her rival had been, and her genius constantly encountered invincible obstacles. The nobles of Austrasia, for a time subdued by Childebert, tried to render themselves independent during the childhood of his son, and combined once again against the despotism of Brunhilda. The young King himself, as weary as they were of his grandmother's yoke, was their secret accomplice. In order to save her life, the old Queen left the palace of Theodebert and Austrasia as a fugitive, and sought an asylum in Burgundy, where she was received with great honour by her other grandson, King Thierry, and the Burgundian nobles. It is said that she had recourse to crime, and corrupted the morals of the young prince in order to subject him the better to her will. Irritated against Theodebert, who had seconded or permitted the violence to which she had been exposed in Austrasia, Brunhilda deferred taking vengeance on him till she had satiated her hatred of the son of Fredegonde. Excited by their grandmother, the two brothers, Theodebert and Thierry, formed an alliance against Clothair II., and the united Austrasian and Burgundian armies came up with the Neustrians at Dormeille, in the country of Sens. Clothair was conquered, and the carnage was awful. The chroniclers of the age tell us that the exterminating angel was seen waving his sword of fire over the two armies. Two years later, Brunhilda, at the head of the Burgundians, gained another victory over the Neustrians at Etampes. Clothair had all but fallen into

her hands, when she learned that Theodebert, King of Austrasia, had treated at Compiègne with their common enemy, whom he had it in his power to crush. This peace saved the son of Fredegonde, but filled with rage the heart of Brunhilda, who from this moment only thought of punishing Theodebert. She armed Thierry against his brother, and, after a sanguinary war that lasted several years, between the Burgundians and Austrasians, the two armies met on the already celebrated plains of Tolbiac. The contest was horrible: the combatants, Fredegarius tells us, were so crowded that the dead had no room to fall, but stood erect one against the other as if still living. Theodebert was conquered, and fled; but fell into the hands of his brother, who put his young son to death before his eyes, while Theodebert himself was murdered by the orders of his implacable grandmother. Thierry died suddenly in the following year.

The priests alone, at this period, raised their voices to brand so many crimes, and their pious courage frequently exposed their lives to danger. The crimes of Fredegonde drew from Pretextatus, Bishop of Rouen, a few Christian and bold remarks; and she had him assassinated at the foot of the altar. Other Gospel teachers reproached Brunhilda, who was nearly sixty years of age, for her shameful debaucheries; and one of them, St. Didier, was stoned by her orders. Another, of the name of Columbanus, who enjoyed a great reputation for sanctity, refused, in the presence of Brunhilda, to bless the King's bastards. He broke the festive cup offered him, and poured the wine on the ground, in reprobation of the royal conduct. He was exiled: the people flocked round to bless him, and his progress to the frontier was a triumph.

Thierry left four sons, of whom Sigebert, the eldest, was scarce eleven years of age. Brunhilda undertook to have him crowned alone, and to maintain the unity of his father's states by evading the custom of division. This attempt excited a rebellion, and the nobles summoned to their aid Clothair II., King of Neustria. Clothair was already on the Meuse, and marched upon the Rhine. Brunhilda proceeded to Worms with her great-grandsons, and sought support from the Germans. A portion of the Austrasian leudes had already passed over into Clothair's camp: the others flocked round their King in order to betray him more easily. The most distinguished of the conspirators were

two powerful Austrasian lords, whose children became by intermarriage the stem of the second royal dynasty of France. They were Arnolph, afterwards canonized as Bishop of Metz, and Pepin of Landen (a town in Hainault), or the Old One. They both, under the authority of the celebrated Warnacharius, Mayor of the Palace in Burgundy, aided the success of the famous plot whose object was the overthrow of Queen Brunhilda and her race.

The combined Austrasian and Burgundian armies met the Neustrians on the banks of the Aisne in Champagne. The conspirators then declared themselves. Clothair II. was hailed as king by all the Franks, and three of Thierry's sons were surrendered to him. He had the young King Sigebert murdered, with one of his brothers: he exiled another to Neustria, but the fourth escaped him, and never reappeared. Lastly, the haughty Brunhilda herself fell into the hands of the son of Fredegonde, who avenged himself as his mother would have done. Brunhilda—daughter, wife, sister, and mother of kings—was abandoned for three days to the executioners, then carried semi-naked round the camp on a camel, and exposed to the outrages of the soldiery, after which she was fastened alive to the tail of a wild horse, which tore her into fragments. She had been for forty-eight years the terror of her enemies, and eventually succumbed because she tried to impose on a semi-savage nation the government of an advanced civilization. The coarse minds of the Franks did not comprehend the advantages derived from the unity of a vast empire; and, even had they done so, they would have refused to sacrifice their individual ambition and fierce independence for them. Brunhilda was fond of the arts: she repaired several Roman roads, and restored many fine monuments. In her religious zeal she lavished immense sums on the clergy, and built a prodigious number of churches and monasteries. All that this queen did received from her a gigantic stamp. Her long reign was sullied by many crimes, but it did not pass away without a certain grandeur and some amount of glory.

After the death of Brunhilda, Clothair II. united under his sceptre the entire Frank monarchy, and was soon able to discover that the unity of his vast empire was only apparent. The nobles of Austrasia, in overthrowing Sigebert, had thought much less about raising Clothair than aggrandizing themselves. They wanted a prince to reside among

them, that they might direct him as they thought proper; and they forced the King to share his throne with his son Dagobert, and give them the latter as their sovereign.' Dagobert, who had scarce emerged from infancy, reigned under the guardianship of Arnolph, Bishop of Metz.

The most celebrated event in the reign of Clothair II. was the council, or synod, of Paris in 615. In the midst of the chaos into which the Frank conquest had plunged Gaul, everything was in disorder and gloom except the Church, which had alone retained, through tradition, literary associations and ideas of public order and regular government. The bishops were generally respected and feared by the kings, in spite of the violence to which several of them were exposed; and, in various instances, they combined with the lay nobles to place a check on the foolish and barbarous authority of the Merovingian princes. They held, during the sixth century, numerous councils; and in the one which assembled in Paris in the reign of Clothair II., two aristocracies came together, that of the bishops and that of the lords. The famous edict which this assembly promulgated forms an epoch in history; for it marked the success of the reaction of the nobles against the kings, by shaking the system of arbitrary government which the latter had tried to found. By this edict canonical elections were established; the clerks remained independent of secular justice; the treasury was prohibited from seizing successions *ab intestato* and raising the taxation; and the judges and officers of the king were rendered responsible. The edict further ordered the restitution of the benefices taken from the leudes, protected rich widows, nuns, and virgins, from the caprice and violence of the princes; and punished any infraction of its provisions with death. One of the chief articles settled that the judges, or counts, should be always selected from the landowners of the parts where their jurisdiction would be exercised; and from this time, the dignity of count belonged nearly always to the richest proprietor in each county, and the royal choice had narrow limits. We know but little more about the reign of Clothair II. Sanguinary wars broke out between him and his son Dagobert, whose independence he was compelled to recognize; and his life was extinguished in the midst of civil troubles. He died in 628, before he had been able to secure the establishment of his second son, Caribert.

## IV.

## REIGN OF DAGOBERT I.

THE sceptre of Dagobert extended over the three great kingdoms of the Frank monarchy—Neustria, Austrasia, and Burgundy; from which he detached Aquitaine, that is to say, the territory between the Loire, the Rhone, and the Pyrenees, and gave it to his brother Caribert. The latter soon died, and his eldest son was assassinated, it is said, by a faction devoted to Dagobert, who resumed possession of his brother's states; but left Aquitaine, under the title of duchy, to the two remaining sons of Caribert, Boggis and Bertrand, reserving, however, all the royal rights over them. The unity of the Frank monarchy was thus once again restored.

If a Merovingian king could have arrested the fall of his dynasty, Dagobert would have had this glory. He followed in the track of Queen Brunhilda, and supported himself against the nobles by appealing to the Gallo-Roman populations, who detested their tyranny: he made terrible examples in Austrasia and Burgundy, and kept the factions in obedience by the terror he inspired. Not one of the kings descended from Clovis caused his power to be more respected, or displayed greater magnificence. The bishops, leudes, and foreign ambassadors, crowded his court; and the spoils of a portion of Europe, gold, silk, precious stones, were displayed in his country palaces, and in his royal residence of Clichy, near Paris. The splendour of Dagobert nearly equalled that of Eastern potentates. In the early part of his reign, he did not allow his mind to be weakened by the luxury with which he surrounded himself, and devoted his time to useful occupations. He it was who had the Salic and Ripuarian laws revised and written, as well as those of his Allemannic and Bavarian vassals. In the end, however, he gave way to debauchery and cruelty; he forgot the claims of justice, and imposed heavy tributes on his people. At the same time, his arms were not successful. The Windi, or Venedes, a Slavonic nation, having been liberated from the yoke of the Avarians by the Frank Samo, elected him as their king, took possession of a portion of Bohemia, and established themselves in the valley of the Danube, which was at this period the great commercial route between Northern Gaul and Constantinople and Asia. A large

caravan of Franks was plundered and massacred by this people. Dagobert demanded satisfaction; and, being unable to obtain it, summoned the Franks to take vengeance. War was proclaimed in all his states, and among his northern and western vassals; and the Germans and Thuringians, united with the Franks and Lombards, marched against the Windi. These armies perished in the desert countries, and the power of the Franks was shaken through the whole of Germany.

Dagobert, from this time, confined his attention to keeping his own subjects in obedience. The Austrasians, ever ready to revolt, forced him to share his throne with his son Sigebert, three years of age, and give him to them as king. Dagobert confided the child to Duke Adalgesil; but he demanded, and obtained, that Popin of Landen, and other Austrasian lords, should remain at his court as hostages. He also had another son, of the name of Clovis, designated and recognized as King of Neustria and Burgundy. The bishops and nobles of Austrasia, *constrained*, as a contemporary historian states, *by their terror of Dagobert*, swore to sanction the dismemberment of his empire. This prince, in the last year of his reign, repulsed an invasion of the Vascons, repressed a revolt in Aquitaine, and made a treaty with the Bretons, who recognized his supremacy.

In spite of the reverses of his arms against the Windi, and numerous causes of internal dissolution, Dagobert remained to the end of his reign powerful and feared. He combined, like many of the princes of his race, a great fervour for religion, and a superstitious devotion, with licentious tastes. He made immense gifts to the clergy, and covered France with churches and monasteries. He gave his confidence to the referendary Audouen, and the jeweller Eligius, the master of the royal mint. These two men, better known by the names of St. Ouen and St. Eloi, were both canonized, and their memory has become popular. Dagobert died in 638. He had displayed great generosity to the monastery of St. Denis, whose basilica he covered with gold and precious stones, and where he was buried with great pomp. This king, despite all his vices, surpassed in merit the majority of the princes of his family. When he died, a century and a half had elapsed since the elevation of Clovis to the throne of the Franks, and this period, marked by so much devastation and so many crimes, was the most memorable during the reign of the Merovingians.

## CHAPTER III.

SLOTHFUL KINGS.—DECAY AND END OF THE MEROVINGIAN DYNASTY.—FROM  
THE DEATH OF DAGOBERT I. TO THE DEPOSITION OF CHILDERIC III.

638-652.

## I.

THE FIRST SLOTHFUL KINGS.—GOVERNMENT OF EBROUIN, MAYOR OF THE  
PALACE IN NEUSTRIA.

AFTER the death of Dagobert I., the Merovingian family only offers us phantoms of kings, brutalized by indolence and debauchery, and whom history has justly branded with the title of *rois fainéants*. Through their very nullity they had an additional title to the throne in the sight of those who reigned in their name. By the side of royalty grew up the magistrature of the Mayors of the Palace, who, during some of the later reigns, had already several times substituted their authority for that of the monarch. They took advantage of the weakness of the Merovingians to usurp *de facto* the entire power. Elected by the leudes, they had for a long period been supported by them in governing the sovereigns; but, when their power was thoroughly established, they crushed the nobles, in order that there might be henceforth no other authority than their own. They then transmitted their office to their sons, and it was eventually regarded as the appanage of a family, in the same way as the sceptre seemed to belong by right to the race of Clovis.

Dagobert, when dying, had recognized Ega as mayor in Neustria, and Pepin of Landen in Austrasia; and had confided to them the guardianship of his two sons, Sigebert III. and Clovis II., between whom his states were divided. Ega died, and Erkinwald succeeded to his office. The childhood and character of the two kings contributed



to a great extent in establishing the power of the mayors of the palace.

Sigebert III., who was entirely devoted to religious practices, lived like a monk in his Austrasian states, and restricted the exercise of his authority to the care of enriching the churches and building monasteries: he died in the flower of his age. Clovis II., on the contrary, only saw in the royalty of Neustria and Burgundy the fatal facility for satisfying his shameful taste for debauchery. Still, his nominal authority extended over the entire monarchy of the Franks, and Austrasia also recognized him as king. The mayor had been succeeded by his son Grimoald. The latter, on the death of Sigebert III., had tried to get the sceptre into his family. He had the youthful Dagobert, son of Sigebert, conveyed to Ireland, concealed the place of his retreat, and dared to place the crown on the head of his own son; but the Austrasian nobles revolted against an authority which was independent of their choice. They put Grimoald and his son to death, and recognized as their master the weak Clovis II., King of Neustria, who very shortly after followed his brother Sigebert III. to the grave, and left his sceptre and empty royal title to Clothair III., his elder son.

The famous Ebrouin, gifted with great talents, and of an inflexible character, was at that time mayor of the palace. Still, he did not succeed in long maintaining the apparent unity of the monarchy. The Austrasian lords required a king who, like his predecessors, should be subject to their influence. They summoned the youthful Childeric, second son of Clovis II., greeted him as King of Austrasia, and gave him for guardian the Mayor Wulfoald.

The nobles had been unable to establish a regular aristocratic government in any one of the three kingdoms forming the monarchy: their power had only tended to render them more and more independent. Ebrouin saw in the progress of their individual authority a step toward general anarchy. He was jealous of the excess of their power; and, either through policy or personal ambition, he wished to remain sole master in Neustria and Burgundy. His despotism caused all the nobles to revolt. The celebrated Bishop of Autun, Leger, of whom the Church has made a saint, placed himself at the head of the insurgents in Burgundy, and gave the example of an obstinate resistance. Ebrouin at first subdued the rebellion, but

the death of Clothair III. shook his power. He did not dare convene the nobles, according to custom, in a national *mall*, in order to elect a successor to this prince, who died childless; and he proclaimed, as king, of his own authority, the youthful Thierry, third son of Clovis II. This violation of the old customs of the kingdom armed the nobles against Ebrouin. The lords of Neustria and Burgundy were no more willing than those of Austrasia to see the mayors usurp the right of election to the throne, and they offered the crown of the two kingdoms to Childeric II., King of Austrasia.

Ebrouin, abandoned by all, took refuge in a church. His life was spared: he was forced to take the tonsure, and was imprisoned in the monastery of Luxeuil. Thierry III. was led as a prisoner into his brother's presence, and confined by his orders at St. Denis.

Childeric II. removed his residence from Metz to Paris. This prince combined with the brutal passions of his degenerate race, the energetic character of his ancestors. Constrained, at first, to subscribe the conditions imposed on him by the nobles who had crowned him, he no longer observed them when he felt his strength. He combated the leudes with severity, and shut up Bishop Leger in the same monastery of Luxeuil, into which the latter had thrown Ebrouin. Misfortune reconciled for a time these two great enemies. They formed a conspiracy against the rash Childeric, who had dared to inflict on one of his leudes, of the name of Bodolus, a dishonourable punishment reserved for slaves. Bodolus and the conspirators surprised the King, while hunting in the forest of Bondy, near the royal mansion of Chelles. Their vengeance was atrocious, for they murdered him, with his wife and children. Ebrouin and Bishop Leger came out of captivity together, and became once more deadly foes. Ebrouin eventually gained the victory over his formidable rival, whom he deprived of sight, and then had him tried by an episcopal synod, and condemned to death. Taking from prison the weak Thierry, a useful and blind instrument of his despotic will, he obtained the support of the masses against the nobles, and exercised for a long time an uncontrolled power. He set everything to work to break up the hereditary aristocracy. He brought the benefices into circulation again; he tore the estates of the treasury from the powerful families that had long regarded them as their patrimony: he divided them among new men,

thus interesting a numerous class of poor tenants in the defence of his work.

Still, a formidable cloud collected against Ebrouin in Austrasia. After the death of Childeric II., this country was again separated from the kingdoms of Neustria and Burgundy. Young Dagobert, son of Sigebert III., was recalled from the monastery where he lived concealed, in Ireland. This young prince, who was greedy and cruel, wished to make victims of the authors of his fortunes, and his rashness was only paralleled by his violence. Imitating the last King, Childeric, he met with a similar fate, and was assassinated by the nobles of Austrasia, without leaving an heir.

Among his murderers were several partizans and relatives of the old mayor, Pepin of Landen, whose male posterity had become extinct with Grimoald and his son, but whose family for a long time retained great influence. A daughter of Pepin, of the name of Legga, had married the son of the great Arnolph, Bishop of Metz. She had a son by him, who received the name of his maternal grandfather, and whom historians, in order to distinguish him from Pepin the Old, have surnamed Pepin of Heristal, from the name of a celebrated estate on which he lived on the banks of the Meuse. This young man, during the interregnum which followed the death of Dagobert, was recognized as one of the chiefs of the aristocracy of the dukes and counts of Austrasia. The nobles triumphed in this country, and were crushed in Neustria and Burgundy. A multitude of exiles from these two kingdoms demanded vengeance of the Dukes of Austrasia upon Ebrouin, and a fresh and terrible collision took place on the plain of Latafao, which had already been fatal to the Austrasians. Neustria was once more victorious. Ebrouin triumphed: but he was unable to cull the fruits of his victory. A lord, of the name of Ermanfroi, who had been proved culpable in his office, and threatened with death, anticipated Ebrouin, by cleaving his skull with his axe, and fled to Austrasia, where Pepin of Heristal overwhelmed him with honours. The historians of the age, mostly deadly enemies of Ebrouin, display him to us as very pitiless and perfidious; but his memory was honoured in some popular legends. "He violently repressed," we are told in them, "all the iniquities that were committed on the face of the earth. He chastised the misdeeds of

proud and unjust men, and caused peace to reign: he was a man of a great heart, although he was too cruel to the bishops."\* Ebrouin, though he had no sceptre or crown, had reigned for twenty years with a power that no king had exercised before him.

## II.

CONTINUATION OF THE SLOTHFUL KINGS.—STRUGGLE BETWEEN AUSTRASIA AND NEUSTRIA.—MAYORALTY OF PEPIN OF HERISTAL.†

THE feeble Thierry was still reigning in Neustria, when Waratho, and after him Berthair, succeeded Ebrouin in his office. The reins of government, on slipping from his powerful grasp, were relaxed in their feeble hands. Civil discord agitated Neustria: hope was rekindled in the banished lords. They renewed their applications to Pepin of Heristal, and the other dukes of Austrasia, and another revolution was resolved on. Pepin announced himself as the avenger of the Frank nobles and priests despoiled by the mayors of Neustria, and was proclaimed commander-in-chief. He encountered the Neustrian army at Testry, in the county of Vermandois, gained a great victory, and made King Thierry a prisoner. Having then assured himself that no one was more fitted than this weak prince to play the part of a puppet king, he recognized him as monarch of Neustria and Austrasia, and governed in his name as mayor of the palace, after destroying the rulers of the party opposed to the nobles. After the death of Thierry, Pepin crowned in succession his two sons, Clovis III. and Childbert III., and then his grandson, Dagobert III.; but he was the real military chief, and sole grand judge of the nation of the Franks. He restored the old national customs, which had been disregarded by Ebrouin.

The great *mallum* or annual assembly, which had fallen into desuetude, was regularly held on the calends of March, and all the members of the nobility were convened to it. The King proceeded thither in a chariot drawn by oxen, wearing the royal insignia, and with his long hair floating down his back. He seated himself in the midst of the assembly, on a golden throne, where the monarch in effigy granted an audience to the foreign ambassadors, and gave them the answers which had been dictated to him. He uttered a few remarks touching

\* Legends of St. Projectus of Auvergne, and St. Martial of Limoges.

peace, war, and the duties of government towards churches and orphans ; and then, returning as he had come, was sent by Pepin to one of the large royal farms, where he was guarded with honour and respect.

This grand scene took place annually : it testifies to the prestige which the memory of Clovis still exercised over the Franks, and to what an extent popular respect attached to the blood of Merovic. This superstitious worship of a degenerate race is a thing difficult to understand in our days ; and we do not know which to feel more surprised at—the boldness of the mayors who, in the presence of a people to whom the name of Merovingian was sacred, thus humiliated the last representatives of this family ; or the cowardly imbecility of the latter, who were all recognized as kings, though not one of them took advantage of these solemn occasions to be so in reality.

The empire of the Franks began to be broken up after the battle of Testry. The princes of the Saxons, Frisons, Allemans, Bavarians, and Thuringians, hitherto vassals of the Merovingian kings, considered themselves the equals of Pepin when they had contributed to his victory. Pepin contended against them, and, almost to his death, had to sustain long and sanguinary wars on all the northern frontiers, while the peoples of Burgundy and Provence shook off his yoke in the south. Those of Aquitaine rallied under the celebrated Eudes, Duke of Toulouse, and descendant of the Merovingian Caribert, brother of Dagobert I., to whom they gave the title of king, and rendered themselves almost independent of the Frank monarchy.

Pepin had two sons, Drogon and Grimoald, by his wife Plectrude, and a third, of the name of Charles, by his concubine, Alpaïde. He gave the duchy of Champagne to his eldest son, who died in 708, and during his own lifetime invested his second son, Grimoald, in the office of mayor of Neustria. An implacable hatred subsisted between the mothers of Charles and Grimoald, who became deadly foes. Pepin grew old ; he fell sick, and was all but dead, when his son Grimoald was murdered almost in his presence. He collected all his strength to avenge him ; he sprang from his death-bed, destroyed all the authors of the murder, and shut up his son Charles, whom he suspected of being an accomplice, in Bologna : then he established Grimoald's son Theobald, who was hardly five years of age, as mayor of the palace. This energetic act exhausted his strength. "He died in 714," the

annals of the Franks tell us, "after commanding for twenty-seven years and six months the whole Frank people, with the kings subject to him—Thierry, Clovis, Childebert, and Dagobert."

### III.

THE LAST SLOTHFUL KINGS.—END OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN AUSTRASIA AND NEUSTRIA.—INVASION OF THE MUSSULMANS.—GOVERNMENT OF CHARLES MARTEL.

PEPIN left at the head of the monarchy two boys—one king, the other mayor—under the guardianship of the aged Plectrude, the grandmother of Theodebald. The Neustrians grew indignant at such a yoke. They revolted against Plectrude and her son, and chose Raginfred as mayor of the palace: then, allying themselves with the Frisons and Saxons, they attacked and disarmed Austrasia. Pressed on all sides, the Austrasians in their turn deserted Plectrude and her son. They took out of a monastery the youthful Charles, the natural son of Pepin, who was endowed with heroic qualities, and enthusiastically recognized him as king. Still, the name of the Merovingians possessed a certain prestige; and on the death of Dagobert III. both factions elected a pretended member of this degenerate race as king, Chilperic II. in Neustria, and Clothair IV. in Austrasia. They nominally reigned, while the two real masters of these states, Raginfred and Charles, prepared for war, and marched against each other. The victory could not be long undecided. The Franks of Austrasia, which country bordered Germany, had lost none of their warlike energy. The advantages they derived from the conquest were a powerful lure for the German tribes in their vicinity, and successive immigrations naturally kept up in the Austrasian nation a more energetic military spirit, and more warlike habits, than in Neustria. Charles, at first defeated, took refuge in the Ardennes, and, assembling veteran bands, placed himself at their head: he surprised the Neustrians, committed great carnage among them, pursued them, and by the memorable victory of Vincy, near Cambray, gained in 717, the whole of Neustria became his conquest. The Neustrians, vanquished but not subjugated, summoned to their aid Eudes, King of Aquitaine, and offered him the sceptre. The Aquitanians regarded the Franks

of the Rhine as far more barbarous than those of the Seine. They had cause to fear lest the ferocious bands of Charles might wish, like those of Clovis in former times, to taste the fruits of the south. They consequently united with the Neustrians, and marched against Charles, who defeated them near Soissons, and pursued them up to Orleans. Clothair IV., the puppet King of Austrasia, had just died. Charles, the victor over the Neustrians and Aquitanians, had Chilperic II., the imbecile King of Neustria, recognized as sovereign of the whole empire of Clovis; and on his death, which took place two years later, he gave him Thierry IV. for a successor, and reigned alone in his name.

The Austrasians, or Ripuarian Franks, triumphed after obstinate wars, and the battles of Vincy and Soissons were the last efforts of the Neustrians. The seat of the Frank Empire was eventually transported to the Meuse and the Rhine; and this was necessary in order to arrest and draw back the devastating tide of new Germanic emigrations.

A more terrible foe menaced the empire of the Franks. Only a century previously, Mohammed had founded a new religion in Arabia; and already his armies, electrified by religious fanaticism and a spirit of conquest, had invaded Asia, Africa, and Spain, and were advancing into Gaul. Never, since the days of Attila, had a more formidable invasion menaced Europe. The torrent crossed the Pyrenees, and first dashed down upon Septimania. Narbonne succumbed, and the fall of that city decided the fate of the country, where the Arab rule was substituted, as in Spain, for that of the Visigoths.

The Mussulmans next menaced Aquitaine, and the other possessions of King Eudes. This prince, whom Charles had conquered at Soissons, held beneath his sway in Southern France several countries which, up to this time, had not formed part of the duchy of Aquitaine, and among others the country of the Waskes, or Basques, better known by the name of Gascons. This valiant race, who dwelt in Upper Navarre, and were descended from the ancient Iberi, had occupied for two centuries the two watersheds of the Pyrenees, where, for a long period, they defended their independence against the Visigoths and Franks. Toward the middle of the sixth century, they made an irruption into Gaul, and settled in a portion of Novempopu-

lania, which received from them the name of Gascony. At the close of the following century, King Eudes, either by victories or treaties, annexed it to Aquitaine, and the two peoples formed but one at the time when Eudes, attacked by the Saracens, gained a great victory over them on the plains of Toulouse. He defeated them a second time, but, being beset by new legions of enemies, he purchased a peace of one of their generals of the name of Munuza,\* by giving him in marriage his daughter Lampagia. Munuza went away, and soon after perished in a civil war against Abd-ul Rahman, Vali, or chief, of the Mussulmans in Spain: his wife, daughter of King Eudes, fell into the power of the victor, who, in his turn, invaded Aquitaine.

Eudes was still carrying on the war in the north of his states, against the invincible Charles, chief of the Franks, when he was menaced in the south by the enemies of all the Christians: he saw his army destroyed by the Mussulmans before Bordeaux, that city burnt, Aquitaine pillaged, and its inhabitants massacred. Feeling that he was too weak to contend against all these foes, and constrained to submit either to the Franks or Arabs, his religion dictated his choice. He proceeded as a fugitive to the martial court of Charles, recognized him as his suzerain, and obtained at this price the help of the Franks. Charles made a warlike appeal to all the warriors of Neustria, Austrasia, and Western Germany; and the formidable army thus raised encountered that of Abd-ul Rahman, in October, 732, on the plains of Poitiers. The destinies of the human race were about to be staked on this famous field: the army of the Franks was the sole barrier capable of arresting the Mohammedan invasion, and it was soon to be known whether the world would become Mussulman or Christian.

For seven days the two armies observed each other without fighting. At last, the Mussulmans, whose number the chroniclers estimate at several hundred thousand, deployed on the plain; and, on a signal from Abd-ul Rahman, his light cavalry commenced the action with a cloud of arrows, and dashed like a whirlwind on the army of the Franks. The latter, motionless on their powerful horses, and

\* The Arabic name of this famous chief was Ebn Abimuça; according to others, Abi Nusea.



defended by their heavy armour, for a long time opposed a wall of iron to the repeated charges of the Saracens, and remained firm in close and serried masses. All at once, the battle-cry was raised in the rear of the Arab army; it was the cry of King Eudes and the Aquitanians, who had turned the enemy's flank, and had fired his camp. A portion of the immense army of Abd-ul Rahman faced the Aquitanians, and disorder, the effect of surprise, opened the ranks of the Arabs. Charles, in his turn, gave the signal: the wall of iron broke, the heavy masses of Germans fell on Abd-ul Rahman's squadrons, and the war-axe and broad-swords of the Franks cropped down entire ranks. Abd-ul Rahman, vainly endeavouring to rally his soldiers, fell, in the midst of his picked troops, pierced with lances, and crushed beneath the horses' hoofs. The Arabs sought a refuge in their ravaged camp. Night having set in, Charles arrested the pursuit; and on the morrow, at daybreak, the Franks saw, in the distance, only a blood-stained plain covered with corpses: darkness had protected the retreat of the Mussulmans, and the Christian cause was gained.

The Arabs evacuated Aquitaine after their disastrous defeat at Poitiers; and this day, for ever memorable, on which it was said that Charles had hammered the Saracens, gained him the glorious surname of Martel, which posterity has retained.

One of the results of this famous campaign was to restore the great province, or kingdom, of Aquitaine and Gascony to the monarchy of the Franks by the oath of vassalage which King Eudes had made to his liberator.\* But in delivering the southern provinces from Mohammedanism, Charles neither saved them from pillage, nor arson, nor massacre: devastation marked the passage of his army, and sullied his victory, for which the Aquitanians did not feel grateful to him; and a profound enmity subsisted between the more civilized nations of the south and the northern barbarians. Charles Martel turned his arms against several tribes of Gaul that had ceased to obey the unworthy successors of Clovis. He subjugated the Burgundians, penetrated into Septimania, and, by the capture of two famous cities,

\* Several chronicles, among others the *Annales du Metz*, say that Charles returned home after subjugating Aquitaine, that is to say, that Eudes fulfilled the engagements imposed on him by his oath, and doubtless renounced the title of king, the sign of his past independence, and only bore that of Duke of the Aquitanians. See *Hist. de France*, by Henry Martin, years 732, 733.

Arles and Marseilles, completed the subjugation of Provence to the monarchy of the Franks.

Under his government the perpetual progress of the clergy in power and wealth was arrested, or, more correctly speaking, suspended, in Gaul. The army constituted the sole strength of Charles; and, in order to attach it better to him, he ventured to seize the estates of the Church, and distribute them among his warriors. He did not assume the name of king, but he appointed no successor to Thierry IV., son of Dagobert III., whom he had crowned upon the death of Chilperic II. His most dangerous enemies were the Frisians, Allemans, and Saxons, who were constantly attracted to the Rhine by the success of the previous invasions. Charles succeeded in driving them back by sanguinary and repeated expeditions, and restraining them by the terror of his name. Death surprised him in 741, when he was undertaking an expedition into Italy, to succour the Pope against the Lombards; but, before expiring, he divided his authority between his three sons, Pepin, Carloman, and Griffo.

Pepin and Carloman dispossessed their brother, and divided the paternal heritage between them; but they soon saw that Charles Martel had not handed down to them with his power the prestige attaching to his formidable name; and, in order to support their authority, they drew from the monastery the last of the Merovingians, who was proclaimed King of the Franks, by the name of Childeric III. The two brothers then contended successfully against the Allemans, the Bavarians, the Saxons, and Aquitanians. Carloman soon felt a disgust of terrestrial grandeur; he became a monk, and entered the monastery of Mont Cassin. Pepin, under the title of Mayor of the Palace, remained sole master of the Frank monarchy. He maintained at this period intimate relations with the Holy See, and gained its gratitude by offering to defend it against the Lombards, and favouring with all his power the success of the missions sent by the Pope into Saxony and Frisia, to convert these still pagan and savage countries to Christianity. At length he grew weary of reigning without sceptre and crown on the steps of the throne; and, having asked the Pope for the title of king, he obtained it, and was crowned in 752 by St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany. He then assembled the general comitia at Soissons, and, relying on his own power, the name of his

ancestors, and the Papal sanction, he was elected King of the Franks. Childeric returned to his cloister, which his race never left again; and Pepin founded a second royal dynasty, which was called the *Carlovingian*, after his father's name.

The power of the Merovingian kings had attained its apogee under Dagobert I. The Frank Empire had at that time for its boundaries the German Ocean, the Atlantic, the Pyrenees, the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, the Upper Danube, and the Rhine. The various nations inhabiting this vast territory recognized the authority of the Merovingian kings, some as being directly subject to them, others as tributaries.

The imperial divisions into provinces only existed in the ecclesiastical order. For this ancient partition of the territory new divisions had been substituted, determined by the successive conquests of the barbarians, and the good pleasure of their chiefs, and which nearly all have ethnographical denominations, that is to say, borrowed from the different nations that had conquered the soil, or occupied it, such as Frisia, Burgundy, Gothia, Vascony, &c. Some, however, derived their name either from the astronomical or geographical situation of the country, as we have seen in the case of Neustria and Austrasia; or from the configuration of the soil, like Champagne (country of plains). Provence (*Provincia*) and Aquitaine (*Aquitania*) alone retained their Roman names.

The great divisions of the Frank Empire directly subject to the Merovingian princes, were—*Neustria* (the country of the West) and *Austrasia* (country of the East), whose limits, as already described, varied, but slightly during the whole existence of the dynasty; *Burgundy*, which also comprised *Provence*, and extended from the southern frontier of *Austrasia* as far as the Cevennes, the Mediterranean, and the Alps; and *Aquitaine*, enclosed between the Atlantic, the Loire, and the Garonne. Dagobert ceded this great province to his brother Caribert, and after him to his two sons, in order that it might be held by them and their descendants, with the title of a duchy. Aquitaine thus remained, for a long time excluded from the states which dimly recognized the authority of the Merovingian kings or of the mayors of the palace.

Round these great states were others governed by separate chiefs,

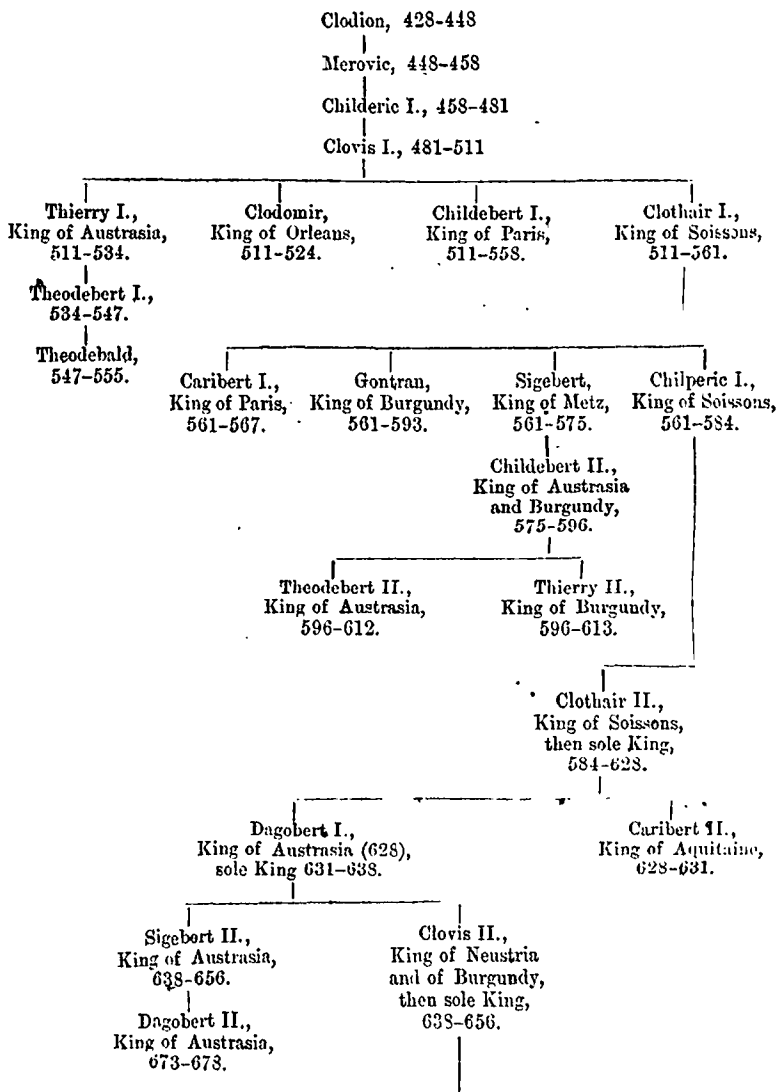
who frequently gave the Frank kings no other sign of submission beyond a slight tribute. These countries were—to the north of Austrasia, between the Rhine and the Weser, *Frisia* and *Thuringia*; to the east, *Allemania* and *Bavaria*; and to the west of Neustria, *Brittany*.

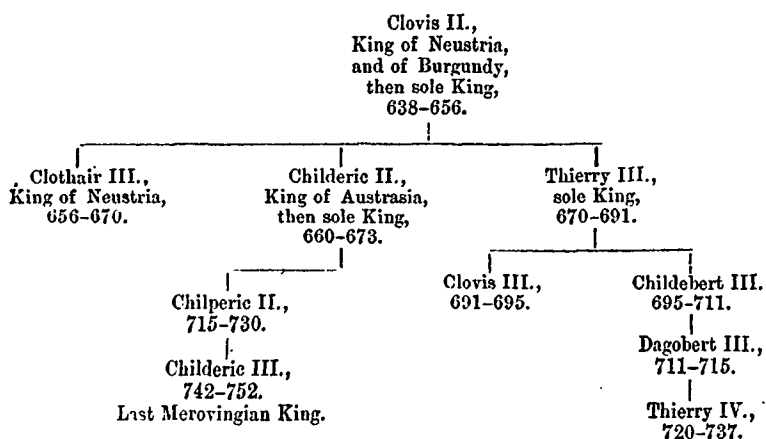
Two countries to the south of Aquitaine still contended for independence: they were *Septimania* (*Narbonensis Prima*), covered with fortified places, and which, defended by its geographical situation between the Rhone, the sea, and the Pyrenees, could not be torn from the Visigoths; and *Vasconia* or *Gascony*. This country, which occupied a portion of *Novempopulania* (Lower Languedoc), again formed, on the death of Eudes, a nearly independent state, which sustained, as we shall see in the reigns of the descendants of that prince, long wars against Pepin and Charlemagne.

The territory subject to the Merovingians was divided, as concerns the administration, into *duchies* and *counties*, whose limits were more or less extended according to the will of these princes. The dukes and counts nominated by them were their principal military and civil officers. These were the Dukes of Auvergne, Aquitaine, Touraine, Poitou, Burgundy, Provence, &c. The counts were intrusted with the government of the old municipal cities, and also with the administration of the *paoi*, or districts forming their territories. The subdivision of the counties into *hundreds*, or *tithings*, dates from the sixth century. Bodies of one hundred and of ten families were certainly formed under the authority of a civil and military officer; but the regular organization of hundreds, and tithings was only introduced under the Carlovingians.

The Church alone retained the old Roman division into provinces and cities much as the Empire had formed them. An ecclesiastical province corresponded with each of the seventeen civil provinces. Each old metropolis was the see of an archbishop, and the one hundred and twenty cities or territorial districts were so many dioceses. In the fifth century the Viennaise had been divided into two provinces, that of Vienne and that of Arles. The number of archbishoprics was thus raised to eighteen. These ecclesiastical divisions of old Gaul existed, with but slight modifications, up to the fourteenth century.

## GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE MEROVINGIAN KINGS.





His death was followed by an interregnum of five years, after which Childeric III. was crowned.

## BOOK II.

GAUL UNDER THE CARLOVINGIAN DYNASTY, 752-987.

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### CHAPTER I.

PEPIN AND CHARLEMAGNE.

752-814.

#### I.

REIGN OF PEPIN THE SHORT.

THE race of Pepin the Short and Charlemagne, before commencing the second French dynasty, had been for more than 150 years in possession of everything that attracts and merits human respect. It was distinguished by illustrious birth, and the triple lustre of great services, virtues, and the most exalted dignities. Several of its members had occupied, with glory, the episcopal see of Metz, and were canonized, and we have seen Austrasia growing in power under the two great ancestors of this family, Pepin the Old or of Landen, and Pepin of Heristal. Their services were surpassed by the great deeds of Charles Martel, the vanquisher of the Mussulmans, who transmitted his name to all his descendants, and whose son, celebrated in history by the name of Pepin the Short, was the first king of his race.

Pepin was the first to grant the Pontiff of Rome the right of disposing of crowns. The Lombards at that time possessed the whole northern part of Italy, and there King Astolph was contesting with Pope Zachariah the government of the city of Rome. Zachariah

required a powerful supporter, and, counting on the help of Pepin if he could render him favourable to his cause, he declared that the throne belonged to the man who performed the duties of king, even though he did not occupy it. The most respected authority at the time was that of the Church: and Pepin, feeling the necessity of giving an imposing sanction to his usurpation, received for his coronation the ceremonies employed at that of the Jewish kings. This example was followed by his successors.

Stephen II, succeeded Zachariah as Pope. Menaced by the Lombards, he went to Pepin and implored his support. The King treated him with the greatest honours, and the Pontiff consecrated him a second time, with his two sons, Charles and Carloman. In the sermon which Stephen preached on this occasion, he implored the Franks never to elect a king from any other family but that of Pepin, and excommunicated those who might be tempted to do so. From this time the papal power daily made rapid progress. The Popes soon believed themselves masters of the world: they demanded the obedience of the sovereigns whom they crowned and deposed according to their caprices; and streams of blood were shed in supporting or combating their arrogant claims.

Stephen had implored Pepin's assistance against Astolph, King of the Lombards. The Frank monarch collected an army, led it to Italy, was victorious, and ceded to the Pope the Exarchate of Ravenna.\*

Pepin successfully waged long and sanguinary wars with the Bretons, Saxons, Saracens, and Aquitanians. The latter, more especially, offered him a furious resistance. Their vast province, as we have seen, had been several times detached from the monarchy of the Franks. The families of the conquerors who settled there had adopted the manners and language of the population, who were of Gallic or Roman origin, and spoke a corrupt Latin. The Aquitanians, more civilized than the Franks, ever detested the latter as barbarians. The revolution which, by elevating the Carolingians, had surrounded the throne with new Austrasian or Germanic bands, gave their government, in

\* The name of Exarchate had been given to this territory because Ravenna was for a long time the residence of the *exarchs* or viceroys of Italy. The celebrated *Pentapolis* (five cities), composed of Rimini, Pesaro, Fano, Smigaglia, and Ancona, formed part of the exarchate.



the eyes of the Aquitanians, an even more savage appearance, and redoubled the horror with which it inspired them.

Still, after the defeat of the Saracens at Poitiers, Duke Eudes remained at peace with Charles Martel, whose suzerainty he had recognized. He died in 735, leaving Aquitaine to his elder son Hunald, and Gascony to his second son Otton. Hunald despoiled his brother of the greater part of his states, and resolved to rend the bonds that subjected him to the Kings of the Franks. He, therefore, waged war against Carloman and Pepin, the sons of Charles Martel, with the greater energy because he was a Merovingian, and regarded them as usurpers of the rights of his family. In 745, however, when Pepin invaded Aquitaine at the head of a formidable army, Hunald ostensibly submitted, laid down his arms, and swore fidelity to the Frank kings. This humiliation to the enemies of his race concealed other thoughts, which were aroused in him either through the decline of his strength, or the pride and hope which he had in his son Guaifer. This young prince possessed all the qualities that constitute a hero, and Hunald saw in him the only man capable of defending Aquitaine against the Franks. He resolved to abdicate, and, after placing Aquitaine in the valiant hands of his son, he bade him farewell, put on a monk's robe, and shut himself up in the monastery of the Isle of Ré, where his father Eudes lay interred.

The war was suspended for several years between Guaifer and Pepin: both observed each other and collected their forces before attacking. Guaifer had opened his states to Greffo, Pepin's brother, who had rebelled against him, but he only kept him a short time. The war between the Franks and Lombards was still going on. Greffo resolved to go to Italy and join King Astolph; he left Guaifer and perished on his journey. Pepin, after bringing the Italian war to a successful end, resolved to conquer Septimania, before attacking the son of Hunald. He subjected that country, which was weary of the Saracen yoke, recaptured Narbonne, and annexed the whole province to the Frank monarchy, after which he invaded Aquitaine. Then commenced a nine years' war, marked by frightful devastations. Pepin ravaged Berri, Auvergne, and the Limousin with fire: Guaifer requited it by ravages on the Franks; but, at last, having lost Clermont, Bourges, and his principal towns, he levelled the walls of all the

others. He perished soon after, assassinated by his countrymen. With him the name of Merovingians became extinct in history, and the grand-duchy of Aquitaine was again attached to the crown of the Franks.

Pepin bestowed great largesse on the clergy, and through his whole life displayed the greatest deference to them. He frequently assembled the *comitia* of the kingdom, to which he always summoned the bishops, seeking to interest them in the success of his enterprises. He was of short stature, whence his *sobriquet*: but is said to have possessed great courage and prodigious strength. History gives us an instance which should perhaps be placed amid fables, but which, at any rate, depicts the manners of this barbarous age. Combats of wild animals were the chief amusement at the court of the Frank kings: Pepin was present at one of these, in which a lion attacked a bull. The latter was all but defeated, when Pepin pointed to the savage combatants, and shouted to the members of his suite, "Which of you will dare to separate them?" No one answered. Pepin leaped into the arena and cut off the heads of the animals. "Well," he said to his lords, as he threw away his blood-dripping sword, "am I worthy to be your king?" In truth, it was sufficient at that day to be brave and strong in order to merit the throne. Pepin combined with these two qualities moderation and prudence. He asked the advice of his nobles in dividing his estates between his two sons Charles and Carloman, and died in 768, after a reign of seventeen years.

The assembly of nobles and bishops had recognized Charles as king of the west, and Carloman as king of the east.

The first expedition of the two brothers was directed, by mutual agreement, against Aquitaine, where an insurrection had been brought about by the aged Hunald, who, to avenge his son Guaifer, emerged from the monastery in which he had lived for twenty-three years: His efforts were powerless, and Hunald, betrayed and conquered, sought refuge with the King of the Lombards.

Ambition soon armed Charles and Carloman against each other. The death of the latter, which event took place in 770, stifled the germs of civil war, and Charles usurped the states of his brother, to the prejudice of his nephews. The latter, with their mother, found an asylum in Lombardy. The whole nation of the Franks from this

moment recognized the authority of Charles, for whom his victories and great qualities acquired the glorious surname of Great or *Magnus*, and who is only known in history by the name of Charlemagne.

## II.

## CHARLEMAGNE.

DURING a reign of forty-six years this prince extended his frontiers beyond the Danube, imposed tribute on the barbarian nations, as far as the Vistula, conquered a portion of Italy, and rendered himself formidable to the Saracens. He first went into Italy, on the entreaty of Pope Adrian I., and marched to assist him against Didier, King of the Lombards, whose daughter he had himself married and repudiated. He made this king a prisoner, and put an end to the Lombard rule in Italy, which had lasted for two hundred and six years. Arigisus, son-in-law of King Didier, continued however, to defend himself in his duchy of Benevent. Charlemagne, during this expedition, went to Rome, where he humbly presented himself to the Pope, whom he had saved, kissing each step of the pontifical palace. He believed himself called to subject to Christianity the barbarous nations of Europe, and when persuasion did not avail to the triumph of the faith, he had recourse to conquest and punishments.

The Saxons formed at this period a considerable nation, divided into a multitude of small republics. They were idolators, like the northern tribes. Their colonies had possessed England for a long time past, and had formerly also subjugated some districts in northern Gaul. Their assemblies were held annually on the banks of the Weser. At one of these, in 771, a priest of the name of Libuin invited them to be converted, while threatening them with a great king of the west. The Saxons took no heed of his words, and wanted to massacre him: they burnt the church of Darenter and all the Christians in it. Charlemagne heard of this and marched against them. A great man of the name of Wittikind commanded their army, but his heroism was of no avail. The Saxons were conquered and subjected. Charlemagne, after putting down several revolts, held a celebrated assembly at Paderborn, where he obliged all the Saxons to receive baptism, and divided their principalities among abbots and

bishops. Hence dates the origin of the ecclesiastical principalities in Germany. Wittikind took refuge with a northern king.

After conquering the Saxons, Charlemagne turned his arms against the Saracens. This people, in subjecting Spain, had taken to that country civilization and learning. Civil wars began, in the eighth century, to shake their power there. The Mussulmans were divided between the family of the Abassides, who resided at Bagdad, and that of the Ommiades, who governed Spain. The latter country, however, was agitated by factions, and one of them entreated the aid of Charlemagne against Abd-ul-Rahman, lieutenant of the Caliph Ommiades. This great man seized the opportunity which was offered him of driving back Islamism beyond the Ebro, and thus extinguishing a formidable focus of troubles and revolts on his own frontiers: he therefore sent two powerful armies into Spain. Saragossa was the point selected for their junction; for the Arab Emir who commanded that place had promised to surrender it to the Frank monarch. Charlemagne's expectations were deceived: Saragossa did not open its gates, and was besieged to no effect. The whole province, on which he had reckoned to help him, rose against him. The principal object of this famous expedition proved a failure: other cares, moreover, recalled Charlemagne, and he ordered a retreat. The defiles of the mountains were held at the time by the Basque nation, who resided in Vasconia, a country governed by Duke Wolf II., son of Guaifer, and grandson of Hunald. This prince had inherited the hatred of his race for the family of Charlemagne, and when he saw the Frank army, on its retreat, entangled in the defiles of Roncesvalles, he had it attacked by his mountaineers, who rolled stones and rocks down on it. The disaster was immense: the rearguard was destroyed to the last man; and here, too, perished the famous Paladin Roland, who is hardly known in history, and so celebrated in the romances of chivalry.

Charlemagne completed, in the following year, the conquest of Saxony, which had again revolted and defeated his lieutenants. He subjected it once again in 782, and, in order to keep it in check by a terrible example, he beheaded, on the banks of the Aller, four thousand five hundred Saxon prisoners. This cruel deed exasperated their countrymen. Wittikind had reappeared among them; they were twice defeated and cut to pieces at Detmold, near Osnaburg, and remained

quiet for several years. Wittikind laid down his arms in 785, and proceeded to Attigny-sur-Seine to do homage to the King of the Franks.

The Frisons, the Bretons of Armorica, and the Bavarians next revolted: they attacked Charlemagne simultaneously, and tried his power. Tassillon, Duke of Bavaria, was son-in-law of King Didier, and brother-in-law of Arigisus, Duke of Benevent. He summoned the Avarians and Slavons to his assistance, and, in accordance with Arigisus, rose against the Franks: but he was conquered without a contest, accused of treason at the assembly of Ingelheim, condemned to death, and eventually confined in the monastery of Jumièges. The nationality of the Bavarians was destroyed, as that of the Lombards had been. The duchy of Benevent, protected by the mountains of the south, alone escaped the conqueror.

Charles had given Aquitaine, with the royal title, to his son Louis, under the guardianship of William Shortnose, Duke of Toulouse. Three other great provinces were equally subject to the authority of the young king. They were—on the east, Septimania or Languedoc, conquered by Pepin the Short; on the west, Novempopulania or Gascony; and lastly, on the south, the marches of Spain. This name was given to the provinces conquered by the Franks beyond the Pyrenees. They were divided into the march of Gothia, which contained nearly the whole of Catalonia; and the march of Gascony, which extended as far as the Ebro into Arragon and Navarre. The latter provinces had for their chiefs Saracen lords who, according to circumstances, obeyed in turn the Frank king and the Arabic sovereign. This vast kingdom of young Louis', bordered by the Loire, the Ebro, the Rhone, and the two seas, was attacked in 793 by the Saracen general Abd-ul-Malak, who defeated Duke William at the passage of the Orbrin, made a great carnage in the Christian army, and returned to Spain with immense booty. Charlemagne deferred taking his revenge: he was occupied with Church matters, the opinions of the faithful being divided at the time between the second Council of Nicæa, which, in 787, had ordered the adoration of images, and the Council of Frankfurt, which condemned them in 497 as idolatry. Charlemagne energetically supported the decision of the last-named council, and defended it against the Pope in a treatise divided into four books, which were

called the *Caroline Books*. Adrian, who adopted the opinion of the Council of Nicæa, however, avoided the expression of any view, and evaded the question in order not to offend his powerful protector.

Charlemagne next turned his efforts against the Avarians, indefatigable horsemen inhabiting the marshes of Hungary. After several disastrous expeditions had been undertaken to subdue them, Pepin, his son, penetrated into their country at the head of a Lombardese and Bavarian army, and seized their famous fortified camp called Ruy, in which they had collected for a number of years the spoils of the East. Pepin carried them off, and his father distributed them among his favourites and the nobles of his court.

The Saxons had joined the Avarians in this war; they had burnt the churches, murdered the priests, and returned in crowds to their false gods. Charlemagne then adopted against them a system of extermination; he established himself with an army on the Weser, ravaged Saxony with fire and sword, carried off a large number of the inhabitants, either as prisoners or hostages, and transported them to the western and southern countries. But the Saxons were not finally subdued till the year 804, after thirty-two years of fighting, revolt, and massacres. Charlemagne, in order to watch and restrain them the better, transferred his usual residence to Aix-la-Chapelle, which he made the capital of his empire.

Leon III. succeeded Adrian I. in 795 upon the pontifical throne. Priests conspired to drag him off it. Wounded and imprisoned by them, he escaped and fled to Spoleto, where he implored the help of Charlemagne, who made a last journey to Italy for the purpose of restoring Leon his crown. Charles, on Christmas day, was on his knees and praying in the Cathedral of St. Peter: the Pope went up to him and placed the imperial crown upon his head. The people straightway saluted him with the name of Augustus; and from this moment Charlemagne regarded himself as the real successor of the Roman Emperors of the West. He adopted the titles and ceremonials of the court of Byzantium, with which he kept up regular relations, and, in order to establish the empire in its integrity, the only thing remaining was for him to espouse the Empress Irene, who, after having her son assassinated, was reigning at Constantinople. Such was Charlemagne's

wish, but he was unable to accomplish it, for Irene was dethroned and died in exile.

Charlemagne, after his coronation as Emperor, had but insignificant wars to wage, and on attaining the supreme dignity, he also reached the end of his most difficult enterprises. He received in his palace at Aix-la-Chapelle the homage of the independent princes of the Veneti and Dalmatians, who ruled at the other extremity of Europe; and such was the ascendancy of his name and fortune that he saw several nations voluntarily range themselves under his laws.

During the last eight years of his reign he promulgated decrees and instituted numerous administrative, ecclesiastical, judicial, and military institutions, which were all intended to strengthen the social order, and maintain all parts of his immense empire in union and peace. He convened, at the field of Mars, in the year 806, an assembly of the nobles of his kingdom, in order to arrange with them the partition of his states between his three sons, Charles, Pepin, and Louis. To the first he assigned the northern part of Gaul with Germany; to the second he gave Italy and Bavaria with his conquests in Pannonia; the third had Aquitaine, Burgundy, and the marches of Spain. This division, consented to by the nobles and the people, was sanctioned by the Pope.

The last years of Charlemagne were saddened by domestic sorrows. He had to blush at the irregularities of his daughters, and lamented the death of his two eldest sons, Charles and Pepin. The first left no children, the second had a son, Bernard, to whom the Emperor granted the kingdom of Italy. He next wished to have the last of his legitimate sons, whom death had spared, Louis, King of Aquitaine, recognized as his successor, and summoned him to the great September assembly at Aix-la-Chapelle. There he presented his son to the bishops, abbots, counts, and lords of the Franks, and asked them to recognize him as emperor. All consented. Then, desirous that his son's power should devolve on him from God Himself, he laid on the altar a crown resembling his own, and after giving Louis an affecting exhortation about his duties to the Church, his subjects, and relatives, he ordered him to take up the crown and place it on his brow.

Charlemagne was attaining the close of his glorious career. He devoted the last months of his life to devotional works, and divided

his time between prayer, the distribution of alms, and the study of versions of the Gospels in different languages. He directed this task up to the eve of his death. He was attacked by fever toward the middle of January, 814. He languished for some days; then, feeling death at hand, he received the sacraments at the hands of Hildebald, his chaplain, and, arranging his limbs *for the eternal rest*, he closed his eyes, repeating, in a low voice, "*In manus tuas commendo spiritum meum*," and expired. He had entered into his seventy-second year: he had reigned for forty-seven years over the Franks, forty-three over the Lombards, and fourteen over the Empire of the West. He was interred at Aix-la-Chapelle, in the Church of St. Mary, which he built.

The exploits and conquests of this great monarch, too often stamped with the barbarism of the age, are not his greatest titles to the admiration and respect of posterity. What really elevates him above his age, is the legislative spirit, and the genius of civilization, both of which he possessed in an eminent degree. Charlemagne undertook to substitute order for anarchy, learning for ignorance, in the vast countries that obeyed him, and to subject to the laws and a regular administration, so many nations, still savage, strangers to each other, differing in origin, language, and manners, and with no other link among them than that of conquest.

The principal and permanent division which he established in his empire was the county, a division generally responding to the old Roman districts called cities. The counts or principal officers of the state, held all the civil, judicial, and military attributes. Below them were the hundredmen, also called *viquiers*, or vicars; they were called *hundredmen*, because their authority extended over a canton, or territory originally occupied by one hundred families. The Emperor had the permanent officers and magistrates watched by a certain number of high functionaries, called *royal envoys* or *missi dominici*, who corresponded directly with him; they were intrusted with the duty of inspecting the various counties, and presiding over the provincial assemblies.

In addition to these assemblies, at which local interests were discussed, two great national assemblies were convened annually. These meetings, whose origin dated back to the old customs of Germany, had fallen into desuetude under the last Merovingian kings. They



acquired a new authority on the accession of the second race, which was raised to the throne by the Austrasian armies, in which the Germanic element prevailed. These assemblies were almost sovereign after the reign of Charlemagne. But this prince was always able to direct them; they were inspired with his genius, and generally restricted themselves to sanctioning his wishes. At this epoch they were, besides, but the shadow of the great *malls*, at which the great nation of the Franks formerly assembled. The influence of Gallo-Roman civilization, the distances to be covered, and the inequality which was established among the conquerors themselves, modified the composition of these great assemblies, from which the public were soon excluded. "It was the custom," writes Archbishop Hincmar, "to hold two assemblies annually. The first took place in the spring. The general affairs of the kingdom were regulated at it; and no event, unless it was an absolute necessity, caused any change in what had been settled. At this assembly came together all the nobles (*majores*) both ecclesiastics and laymen (dukes, counts, and bishops): they formed decisions, and submitted them for adhesion to the members of the second class (*minores*—the vicars, hundredmen, and royal officers of inferior rank), who were merely consulted." Hincmar goes on to tell us that "the other assembly, at which the general gifts of the kingdom were received, was solely composed of the most important members of the previous assembly, and the king's councillors. At it were discussed affairs for which it was necessary to make provision—war, truce, administrative measures, &c. At both these assemblies the king submitted for deliberation the articles of law, called *capitula*, which he had himself drawn up, with the inspiration of God, or which had been found necessary in the interval between the two assemblies. Messengers of the palace served as intermediators between the assembly and the prince; still, if the members expressed the desire, the king would go to them, remain as long as they pleased, and they gave him their opinion on all sorts of matters in a most familiar way, questioning him, and recommending each to inform himself of all that was going on within and without the empire during the period before the next meeting." \*

\* Epist. ad Proceres regu. pro instit. Carolomanni regis et de ordine palat. ex Adalardo. (Hincmar, *Opéra*, Vol. II., pp. 201-205.)

A part of the ordinances to which Hincmar alludes by the name of *capitulars* has been handed down to us, and, in spite of their confused language, they bear testimony to the wisdom of their author. His genius embraces everything. He provides with equal intelligence for the greatest interests of his people and the administration of his private domains. His chief attention is directed to the clergy, whom he provides for by tithes, in order to compensate them for the spoiliations of Charles Martel. He prescribes to ecclesiastics subordination, the obligation of self-instruction, the transmission of their learning to the people, the reformation of abuses, and a prohibition of appearing in arms and fighting. It was a small thing to make wise laws, but their execution had also to be provided for. Charlemagne succeeded in effecting this by means of his envoys. We have seen that they corresponded directly with the Emperor; he was also informed of everything, and his authority acted simultaneously at each point of his vast estates.

Charlemagne understood that the most efficacious method of civilizing a nation is by instructing it; he consequently sought to restore a taste for letters and the arts. He encouraged the laborious tasks of the monks, who preserved the celebrated writings of antiquity by transcribing them; he even obliged the princesses, his daughters, to occupy themselves in this task. He founded and supported schools in a multitude of places; he frequently inspected them himself, and examined the pupils. He established one in his own palace; and the following words, addressed by him to the young students who frequented it, have been recorded:—"Because you are rich, and sons of the first men in my kingdom, you believe that your birth and wealth are sufficient for you, and that you have no need of these studies, which would do you so much honour. You only think of dress, sport, and pleasure: but I swear to you I attach no weight to this nobility and this wealth which attract consideration to you; and, if you do not recover most speedily by assiduous study the time you have lost in frivolities, you will never more obtain anything from Charles."

He employed of preference, in affairs of state those persons who were distinguished by their acquirements. A library had been formed by his care in his palace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and, during his meals, he had esteemed works read to him or conversed with learned men. His

secretary, Eginhard, who has left us curious details about this reign, was one of the most learned men of his time; and Charlemagne spared nothing to attract to his court men of letters and clever professors. Among those who enjoyed his favour, the most celebrated is the Saxon Alcuin, a prodigy of learning for the age in which he lived.

The principal occupation of those who applied themselves at that time to letters was poetry, the study of grammar, theology, the Scriptures, and the Church Fathers. Interminable controversies were carried on about the honours which ought to be paid to images; these disputes occasioned long wars in the East, and several times shook the throne of Constantinople. Geometry, astronomy, and medicine were cultivated, but charlatanism and superstition disfigured the two last sciences. Exalted men or scamps asserted that they could read the future by examining the planets, and this false science, studied under the name of astrology, was long held in honour. People were beginning to occupy themselves with sculpture, painting, and goldsmith's work; and among the fine arts architecture was cultivated. Charlemagne enriched his residence at Aix-la-Chapelle with precious marbles from Ravenna, and the spoils of several other Italian cities; he also erected numerous buildings, and the vestiges of the edifices of that age display far more solidity than elegance in the processes of the art.

Among the inventions of this century we must mention paper made of cotton, organs played by water, and Turkey carpets. Clocks with wheels also began to be known in the West; the Caliph Haroun-al-Raschid, one of the greatest princes the Mussulmans ever had, sent a very remarkable and valuable one to Charlemagne. The Church chants contributed greatly to the solemnity of the service; people went regularly to the divine office in the daytime, and some at night too. Charlemagne decided that the Gregorian Chant should be used in all the churches of his empire; and the custom established in the eighth century of reckoning the years by the Christian era, or from the birth of the Saviour, became general in his reign. This prince, who was ignorant himself, but worthy, through his genius, of sharing in everything that was great and useful, seconded mental efforts of every description by his assiduous care, praise, and rewards. This was the way in which he employed his leisure between his martial undertakings.

In the Empire of Charlemagne a distinction must be drawn between the countries directly subject to the Emperor and administered by his counts, and those which were only tributary. The former alone constituted the Empire properly so called, whose limits were—to the north, the German Ocean and the Baltic, as far as the Island of Rugen; to the west, the Atlantic, as far as the Pyrenees; to the south, the course of the Ebro, the Mediterranean, from the mouth of the Ebro, in Spain, to that of the Garigliano, in Italy, and the Adriatic, up to the promontory of Dalmatia; to the east, Croatia, the course of the Theiss, Moravia, Bohemia, a part of the Elbe, and a line which, starting from the angle which the latter now makes when turning westward, would run along the western shore of Rugen.

The immense country comprised between these limits was administered by the free counts. We must, however, except the Armorican peninsula or Brittany, which was only tributary, as well as the country of the Navarrese and Basquos, situated between the Elbe and the Pyrenees; the States of the Church, or Patrimony of St. Peter, governed by the Bishop of Rome; Gaëta, Venice, and a certain number of maritime cities in Dalmatia, which were dependent on the Greek Empire of Constantinople.

Along these frontiers was a number of tributary states more or less in a state of dependence on the Emperor. The principal nations were—in Italy, the Beneventines; in Germany, several Slavonic tribes on the banks of the Danube, the Elbe, and the Baltic, up to the Oder. The sceptre of Charlemagne also extended, in the Mediterranean, though not without perpetual and sanguinary conflicts, over the Balearic Islands, Corsica, and Sardinia.

Charles Martel, Pepin, and Charlemagne, after taking into their own hands the mayoralties of Neustria and Austrasia, and overthrowing the hereditary Dukes of Aquitaine, Lombardy, Allemannia, Thuringia, Bavaria, and Frisia, subjected all the states of the Frank Empire to the same political organization. Charlemagne divided them, for administrative purposes, into legations and counties, which responded generally to the old territorial divisions of the Roman Empire into provinces and cities. These, however, were wont to vary according to circumstances, and the will of the prince. The legations, the administration of which Charlemagne entrusted to his *missi* or envoys, seem

to have been the origin of the principal duchies. The Emperor had received the direct administration of the countries between the Rhine and the Meuse, in which the ancient domains of his family were situated.

Some provinces upon the borders bore, as we have already stated, the name of *Marches*. They were—the Western March (Austria): the March of Carinthia (the Duchy of Friseli), to which were attached all the countries to the south of the Drave, and the two *Marches* of Spain, Gothia and Gascony.

In addition to the great divisions into *legations*, we have seen that Charlemagne established or reconstituted for his sons Louis and Pepin two kingdoms: that is, Italy, with the March of Carinthia and the Patrimony of St. Peter, and that of Aquitaine, with the *Marches* of Spain. Still, he kept the two kings in strict dependence; and though they had a more pompous title and more extensive functions, they were in their states, like the *missi* in the *legations*, no more than the first lieutenants and representatives of the Emperor.

Pepin ceded to the Bishop of Rome the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis: Charlemagne confirmed this gift. These two territories, joined to the city of Rome and the surrounding country, formed the state temporally governed by the Pope, which retained the name of the Patrimony of St. Peter. Authors are not agreed as to the conditions on which this donation was made; but the general opinion is that the Domain or Patrimony of St. Peter was considered, up to the reign of Louis the Debonnaire, a fief dependent on the Emperor.

The Merovingian princes had laid the foundation of numerous cities in their states, and more especially in Neustria, where their principal residences were. The Carolingian kings, their successors, made their most important foundations in Austrasia, and beyond the Rhine. Many cities owe their existence to Charlemagne, the best known among them being Halle, Hamburg, Deventes, Tugolstadt, and Aix-la-Chapelle. The latter city, which he rendered flourishing in a few years, became his principal residence, and capital of his empire. He also founded several bishoprics, and numerous monasteries, most of which became, in the course of time, important towns. Many other cities were also embellished and enlarged by Charlemagne; among

others, Ingelheim and Nimeguen, where he had two magnificent palaces, Metz, Mayence, Strasburg, Essenfeld, Paderborn, Ratisbon, and Magdeburg, which, being nearly all strongly fortified, served as a defence or barrier to his empire.

Charlemagne kept his peoples united and under subjection by the ascendancy of his glory and the terror of his arms; but for vast associations of men to subsist for any length of time with a common centre upon an immense territory, it is necessary either that the peoples should submit to an absolute authority, which was repulsive to the haughty and independent humour of the Frank race, or else that learning and civilization should have made sufficient progress for them to recognize the necessity for their union, as well as the obligation of sacrificing private to general interests. Such was not the state of the nations governed by Charlemagne. Some distinguished men raised their voices in vain: the masses remained plunged in barbarism. A few years do not suffice to make a people pass from a savage into a civilized state, from ignorance to learning. Such a task is one of ages. Charlemagne appeared to the world as a brilliant meteor, which, in disappearing, only leaves behind a reminiscence of its brilliancy, and the vivid light it shed around: but this reminiscence was not useless to the world, and the example which this great man gave bore its fruit among posterity. He himself, however, was able to observe the certain signs of an approaching dissolution. He knew the national enmities which subsisted between the different nations he had subjected; and the calmness which they had long enjoyed internally was not that of a nation reposing in its strength, but rather a calm of weariness and exhaustion. His capitularies rendered military service obligatory on every free man possessed of a *meusa* of land or twelve acres, under penalty of paying the enormous fine of sixty pence in gold, or the loss of liberty: a great number preferred slavery. The greater portion of the crown lands had been given to nobles and bishops; and the right of possession over the inhabitants being at that time confounded with the ownership of the soil, a multitude of labourers had fallen into a condition of serfdom. The free men themselves, crushed by the weight of taxation and military service, and wearied with so long a reign, eagerly desired its termination. They only performed with repugnance their duty as citizens, and generally

neglected going to the provincial assemblies or those of the Field of May.

The expenses of the journey, and the presents demanded of them, rightly appeared to them an intolerable burden; and they displayed no zeal in supporting institutions, of which they recognized neither the wisdom nor the utility.

Such were the imminent precursive signs of a rapid dissolution. Charlemagne's presentiments were only too fully justified toward the close of his life. New nations, that came from the north, the Danes, also called Normans, infested the coasts of his empire. In order to repulse them, he had large barques built, which defended the mouth of the rivers. This barrier, and the terror he inspired, sufficed during his lifetime to keep these barbarian invaders aloof. One day, however, ships, manned by Scandinavian pirates, unexpectedly entered the port of a town in Gallica Narbonensis, where the Emperor was residing. He saw them, and, going up to a window to watch their flight, he stood there for a long time with his face bathed in tears. Then, turning to the nobles, who were watching him, he said to them, "Do you know, my faithful friends, why I am weeping so bitterly? Assuredly I do not fear that these pirates will injure me, but I am profoundly afflicted by the thought that they nearly landed on these shores during my lifetime, and I am tortured by a violent grief, when I foresee all the evils they will inflict on my nephews and their peoples."

The perpetual wars which Charlemagne waged in order to maintain the unity of his immense empire, and substitute in it civilization for barbarism, originated from his victories themselves: and they rather bear testimony to the greatness of his efforts than to their success. His work remained incomplete, but his glory consists in having undertaken it; and if he did not complete it, it was because completing was impossible.

## CHAPTER II.

FROM THE DEATH OF CHARLEMAGNE TO THAT OF CHARLES THE FAT.

814—888.

## I.

LOUIS THE DÉBONNAIRE, OR THE PIOUS.

814—840.

CHARLEMAGNE'S object had been to rescue Europe from the anarchical reign of brute force: he wished that his will should be everywhere present. "He applied himself," as a modern historian has said, "to render the exercise of power regular and salutary to the people; \* and he everywhere substituted his intelligent and central action for the action of a number of blind and isolated local authorities, whom he held in check, without destroying. These powers derived their origin and force from old Germanic institutions and customs; and these did not work in unison either to establish or maintain the unity of a vast Empire. Among these customs, three were quite incompatible with the principle of imperial authority, such as Charlemagne had attempted to re-establish in the West. They were, first, the legislative and, in some cases, sovereign power of the national assemblies; next, the jurisdiction of the nobles over their vassals, and the right of private war; and lastly, the custom which shared the succession among all the sons, and which, in default of sons, left the right of succession doubtful between the nephews and uncles.

Charlemagne did not make any absolute attack on these three customs, though they were so incompatible with the monarchical system which he attempted to introduce. We have seen that he recognized the

\* Guizot, *Histoire de la Civilisation en France*.



legislative authority of the national assemblies, and that the latter, which he directed and converted into useful instruments, were regularly convoked during his reign; he did not destroy the right of seignorial Jurisdiction, which was a formidable right, and one difficult to separate from the right of private war; he was even constrained to confirm the latter, by obliging the *vassals* or *liegemen* to follow their lord in his private quarrels, under penalty of losing their benefices; \* and he could not prevent the duties of the vassal toward his lord appearing more sacred than those which attached them both to the State. Lastly, in the partition which Charlemagne made at Thionville, of his states among his sons, we do not find that he dreamed of maintaining the unity of his empire after his own death; he did not raise the eldest above the others; and, at a later date, when he shared his authority with Louis the Débonnaire, his two brothers were dead: hence, then, the great question of the supremacy attaching to the imperial title, and of the degree of power which the prince invested with it would have to exercise over the kings of his own family, was not settled by Charlemagne. Perhaps he had a foreboding that so many nations, differing in language, origin, and customs, could not live for any length of time, united under the same hand; perhaps, too, by himself dividing his vast states between his sons, he had hoped to prevent disastrous wars, and he doubtless believed that it would be better to do by common agreement what time and violence would not fail to do after his death.

If such were Charlemagne's provisions, they were speedily confirmed by the inutility of his son's efforts to retain for any length of time the fiction of imperial unity. The situation was more powerful than the men, and the Carolingian Empire crumbled away less through the weakness of Louis the Débonnaire and his successors, than through the want of the institutions necessary for its duration, and, above all, by the impossibility of rendering the latter acceptable to the peoples they were intended to govern. The dissolution of this empire, accelerated

\* Et si quis cum fidelibus suis contra adversarium suum pugnam aut aliquod cutamen agere voluerit, et convocavit aliquem de comparibus suis ut ei adjutorium prebuisset, et ille noluit et exinde negligens permansit: ipsum beneficium quod habuit auferatur ab eo, et dicitur cui in stabilitate et fidelitate sua permansit.—*Karoli M. Capitulare*, A. 813-820.

by so many causes, had as its principal results the complete separation of the peoples of different race, and the subdivision of each of these peoples into a multitude of small principalities, which had no other bond of union than that which was established by the feudal régime.

Louis I., surnamed the Débonnaire and the Pious, son and successor of Charlemagne, was soon crushed by the burden which his father had left him. Unskilful in his conduct, and of weak character, but animated by a desire for justice and a desire for the right, he hastened to order severe reforms; and ere he had established his authority on a solid basis, he punished powerful culprits, and tried to destroy a multitude of abuses by which the nobles profited. The oppressed nations found in him a just judge and indulgent master. He protected the Aquitains, the Saxons, and Spanish Christians against the imperial lieutenants, and diminished their taxes, to the injury of their governors. He reformed the clergy, by obliging the bishops to remain in their dioceses, and subjecting the monks to the inquisition of the severe Benedict of Anania, who imposed the Benedictine rule upon them. Lastly, giving the example of good manners, he tried to avenge morality by disgracefully expelling from the imperial palace his father's numerous concubines, and the lovers of his sisters. But he could not keep either his court or his warriors in obedience, and his weakness for his wives and children occasioned long and sanguinary wars.

In the hour of danger, all those whose interests he had violently injured leagued against him. The first insurrection took place in Italy. The Emperor had shared the empire with his son Lothair,\* with the assent of the Franks assembled at the *comitia* of Aix-la-Chapelle in 817; then he gave the kingdoms of Bavaria and Aquitaine to his other two sons, Louis and Pepin: his nephew Bernard remaining King of Italy. The latter, whose father was the Emperor's elder brother, was jealous at the elevation of Lothair, for he hoped, after his uncle's death, to obtain the imperial crown as chief of the Carolingian family. A great number of malcontent lords and bishops invited Bernard to assert his rights, and collected troops. Louis marched to meet his nephew at the head of his soldiers of France and Germany.

\* The second race adopted the names of the first, but the German language was beginning to lose its roughness in Gaul: thus, the name of *Klothair* became *Lothair*, &c. &c.

On his approach, Bernard, who was deserted by a portion of his followers, obtained a safe conduct from the Emperor, and went into his camp, with several chiefs of his army. Louis, impelled to act with unjust rigour by his consort Ermengarde, who coveted Italy for her sons, had Bernard's accomplices tried and executed, while the unfortunate King himself was condemned to lose his sight, and did not survive the punishment. A few years later, the Emperor, in a national assembly held at Attigny, on the Aisin, did public penance for this crime, and, prostrated at the feet of the bishops, asked for absolution. From this period he only displayed weakness. The frontier nations insulted the Empire with impunity; the Gascons and Saracens in the south, the Bretons in the west, and the Norman pirates in the north, committed frightful ravages, and spread terror around them. Internal discord seconded their audacity: the imperial troops were defeated, and Louis saw his frontiers contracted in the north and south. In this way, the kingdom of Navarre was founded at the foot of the Pyrenees.

Ermengarde, the wife of Louis the Débonnaire, died in 818, and the Emperor espoused in the following year Judith, daughter of a Bavarian lord. He had by her a son called Charles, for whom his mother asked a kingdom; and Louis promised him one, although he had given everything away before. After granting to Lothair the kingdom of Italy, the heritage of the unfortunate Bernard, he obtained from that prince the oath to defend his young brother Charles, and maintain him in the possession of the share which might be assigned him; after which, the Emperor, at the Diet of Worms, held in 829, gave Charles, the son of Judith, Suabia, Helvetia, and the Grisons, which he formed into the kingdom of Germany.

Lothair soon repented the pledge he had given his father, and sought a mode of destroying the result of the decisions of the Diet. He found an opportunity, in the blind weakness of the Emperor for the Aquitanian Bernard, Duke of Septimania, and son of his old guardian, William Shortnose. Duke Bernard was generally considered the lover of Judith and father of Charles. Louis made him his sole councillor and prime minister. The public clamour became general; a numerous party of malcontents was formed, principally composed of nobles and bishops, and who were joined by the Emperor's three sons, who were irritated at his weakness and anxious about their possessions.

The latter commenced an impious war against their father. He fell into their power at Compiègne. Judith was confined by them in a convent; Bernard took to flight, and the Emperor was left under the direction of a few monks, while Lothair seized the government of the Empire.

The peoples were divided between Louis and his sons; the latter were supported in their revolt by the inhabitants of Gaul, while the Germans remained faithful to the Emperor, who consulted a general assembly of the states for the same year, at one of their cities, Nimeguen. They pronounced in his favour and against his sons. Lothair was reconciled to his father by sacrificing all his partizans to him. Judith and Bernard were recalled to court, and purified themselves by oath from the crimes imputed to them; Louis began to reign again, and once more disgusted the nation by his weakness. His sons—Lothair, Louis, and Pepin—revolted once again, took up arms, and marched against their father. Pope Gregory IV. was with them, and tried in vain to prevent bloodshed. The two armies encountered near Colmar; all at once the Emperor's troop deserted him. The which this defection took place received the name of the *Plain of plain on Falsehood*. The eunfortunate King fell into the hands of his son Lothair, who carried his impiety so far as to make him undergo an infamous punishment under the cloak of a Christian and voluntary humiliation, in order to degrade him for ever. A council of bishops devoted to Lothair was assembled for this purpose at Compiègne and presided over by Ebbon, Archbishop of Reims, a furious enemy of Louis. A list of crimes was drawn up, among which figured that of having ordered the army to march during Lent, and convoking the Parliament on a Good Friday. The captive Emperor was forced to make a public confession. He appeared in the cathedral, pale and bowed down by shame and sorrow. He tottered along through a multitude of spectators, and in the presence of Lothair, who had come to enjoy the humiliation of his father and his Emperor. A hair cloth was laid at the foot of the altar; the archbishop ordered the sovereign to take off his imperial ornaments, belt, and sword, and prostrate himself on the cloth. Louis obeyed: with his face against the ground he demanded a public penance, and read aloud a document in which he accused himself of sacrilege and homicide. A *procès-verbal* was drawn

up of this criminal scene, and Lothair conducted his father as a prisoner to Aix-la-Chapelle, the seat of the Empire, a place which had formerly witnessed his grandeur and now his ignominy.

Louis the German and Pepin declared themselves the avengers of their outraged father, far less through affection for him than through jealous hatred of their brother; the latter, deserted by his partizans, took refuge in Italy, while the Emperor, with the assent of the states assembled at Thionville, resumed his crown. He pardoned Lothair, but in 838, at the states of Kersy-on-the-Oise, he for a second time benefited his son Charles at the expense of his elder brother, and Louis the German consented to cede a portion of his provinces to his brother.

Pepin, King of Aquitaine, died in the course of the year; he left a son of the same name, dear to the Aquitains, who had seen him attain man's estate among them, and who eagerly recognized him as king. This people always endured with impatience a foreign rule. It nourished the hope of forming an independent and separate nation, and hoped to induce Pepin II. to revolt against the Emperor, as his father, Pepin I., had on several occasions been persuaded to do.

The Emperor, however, had other projects; he secretly reserved Aquitaine for his son Charles. On his side, Louis regretted the concession which he had made at Kersy of the great portion of his states to his brother, and had taken up arms again; the Germans had followed his banner to the right bank of the Rhine; but the armies of Gaul, composed of a mixture of men of the Gallic and German races established for a long time in that country, and to whom we may henceforth give the name of *French*, had remained faithful to the Emperor. He crossed the Rhine at their head. On his approach the Germanic army disbanded without striking a blow: his son Louis retired into Bavaria. The Emperor punished him by reducing his inheritance to that solitary province.

The moment had arrived to secure Charles the share which his affection had always desired for him at the expense of his brothers. He resolved to divide the Empire, exclusive of Bavaria, into two parts of equal size, destined for Lothair and Charles, and decided that one of these princes should make this division, and the other have the choice. This new partition was to be sanctioned and proclaimed in a Diet con-

voiced at Worms in the month of May, 839. Lothair proceeded thither. In the presence of the assembled nobles, he threw himself at his father's feet and asked his pardon for the annoyance he had caused him. Then, having left to his father the task of dividing his Empire, the Emperor effected the partition by a line which, starting from the mouths of the Scheldt, ran along the Meuse up to its source, and the Saône as far as its confluence with the Rhone, and terminated at the mouth of the latter river. The choice was left to Lothair, who took the eastern moiety of the Empire, comprising Italy, Germany, less Bavaria, Provence, and a small part of Burgundy and Austrasia; Charles had for his share Aquitaine, Neustria, and the rest of Austrasia and Burgundy. The claims of their brother Louis were entirely passed over in this partition, and Pepin II., the Emperor's grandson, was despoiled. These two princes took up arms, and the Emperor, who was already advancing upon Aquitaine, stopped in indecision, not knowing which foe to fight first, his grandson or his son. At length, on seeing the Bavarians, Thuringians, and Saxons, in insurrection on behalf of Louis, the old Emperor turned his army against him; and he marched into Germany to encounter his son, who had rebelled for the third time, when he was attacked by an illness, which brought him to the grave at the end of forty days. "Alas!" he said, while expiring, "I pardon my son; but let him remember that he caused my death, and that God punishes parricides." He died at Ingelheim, at the age of sixty-two.

Louis the Débonnaire was not born for the throne; still, he had some of the qualities of a good prince. His morals were firm; he paid great attention to the administration of justice and the instruction of his people, made useful regulations, and frequently consulted the *comitia* of the Empire; but he possessed neither strength nor dignity, without which the supreme authority is but a vain word. His imprudent weakness for Charles, the son of his old age, occasioned wars which were only extinguished with his race. In order to ensure him a vast empire, he embroiled all the frontiers of his states; and this partition accelerated the outbreak of frightful calamities.

## II.

## FROM THE DEATH OF LOUIS THE DÉBONNAIRE TO THAT OF CHARLES THE FAT.

AFTER the death of Louis the Débonnaire, the Empire was plunged for ten years into a horrible anarchy. His three sons and his grandson, Pepin II., levied troops and carried on an obstinate war against each other. The Emperor Lothair united with his nephew Pepin to despoil his two brothers—Louis, who was called *the German*, and Charles II., who from this period was surnamed *the Bald*. The former only possessed Bavaria; the second was master of the whole of Germany. The deplorable situation of the Empire, thus parcelled out by different masters and torn by their hands, has been eloquently described by a contemporary poet:—"Who could worthily describe," he says, "the asylums of religious life overthrown, the holy spouses of the Lord surrendered to the infamy of the secular yoke, the very chiefs of the Church exposed to the perils of arms and carnage? . . . . Once on a time flourished a noble empire, with a dazzling diadem; it had but one prince, and a great people was subject to him. . . . . Now the proud edifice has fallen from its height, as crown of flowers falls from the brow which it decorated. . . . . The unity of the empire has perished in a triple partition; no one is longer considered as emperor; in lieu of a king there is only a weak prince; instead of a kingdom the fragments of a kingdom. The wall is threatened with an immense and sudden ruin; it is already cracked and bulging, and scarce supported by a liquid mud which is about to fall, and the overthrow is universal." \*

The combined armies of the two kings, Louis and Charles, encountered those of the Emperor Lothair and his nephew Pepin near Auxerre, and fought a sanguinary engagement in the Plains of Fontenay; it is said that one hundred thousand men perished on this day. Lothair was conquered, and the two victorious princes, who were themselves weaker than they had been before the victory, could not pursue him. They proceeded to Strasburg, where they resumed their alliance in the presence of the people. The oath which Louis the

\* Flori deaconi Lugdunensis Guertia de divisione imperii post mortem Ludov. Pii.

German pronounced on this occasion in such a way as to be understood by his brother's Neustrian and Gallo-Roman army, is the oldest memorial history has preserved for us of the Romanic language.\*

A new partition was made soon after at Verdun between the three brothers, and irrevocably separated the interests of Gaul as a power from those of Germany. Charles had the countries situated to the west of the Scheldt, Saône, and Rhone, with the north of Spain up to the Ebro. Louis the German had Germany up to the Rhine. The Emperor Lothair, renouncing all supremacy, connected to Italy the territory situated between his brother's states. The long strip of land, which comprised four populations, and in which four different languages were spoken, formed an entirely factitious division, of such a nature that it could not be perpetuated. The two other divisions were more durable, and henceforth the denomination of *France* was employed to designate the kingdom of Charles, in which Neustria, Brittany, and Aquitaine were comprised.

So many commotions and combats completely exhausted the kingdoms formed out of the *débris* of the empire. The little amount of strength left to them was consumed by these intestine wars, the frontiers were abandoned to foreigners, the land remained uncultivated, famine destroyed entire populations, and the ancient barbarism reappeared. The Normans, united to the Bretons, in the north and west, the Saracens in the south, laid waste everything with fire and sword; bands of wolves came after them down the mountains and even entered the towns. Rouen, Bordeaux, and Nantes were burnt; the Normans reached Paris on board three hundred galleys; and while terror kept Charles shut up at Saint Denis, they plundered the capital, and only left it to reappear there soon after more numerous and formidable. These men of the north, called *Danes* in England, and *Normans* in Gaul, had remained pagans, and were still proud, even in the ninth century, of their title as sons of Odin. Their natural ferocity was kept up and incessantly excited by a continual life of brigandage. A law of the country, which was maintained wherever this people founded establishments, tended to perpetuate on the coasts of Denmark and Norway the existence of this race of pirates. It was one

\* This language is composed of a corrupt Latin, mixed up with the idiom of some of the peoples of Frank Gaul.



of the principal causes of the frightful evils which they inflicted from the ninth to the eleventh century on European nations; and to it must be referred the first origin of the empires which these peoples founded. This law, which is still in force in England, gave to the eldest son alone in Denmark and Norway the patrimony of the family. It affected the families of the kings as well as those of the subjects. The eldest son of the chief or king alone inherited his father's sceptre and estates. His brothers, though recognized as kings by the customs of the northern nations, had the ocean as their kingdom, on which they sought their fortune: hence the name of *sea-kings*, which was given to them, and which collected under their banner a multitude of men, who, like themselves, had no other patrimony beyond their sword. One of these chiefs, who was famous for his audacity and ferocity, the pirate Hastings, after ravaging France, penetrated into Italy, and returned to spread desolation and terror on the whole country between the Seine and the Loire. Charles the Bald had intrusted the defence of this territory, with the title of Count of Anjou, to a celebrated warrior, Robert the Strong, who was already Count of Paris, and the glorious founder of the Capitian dynasty.\* Robert, whom the chronicles of the time called the Maccabæus of France, was killed, and nothing arrested the devastating torrent from that moment.

In the midst of the general weakening of the Empire, the clergy alone increased their fortune and power. The more miserable the people were, the more they directed their thoughts to another future, and respected the men in whom they recognized the power of opening the gates of a better world for them. The real master of Gaul was Hincmar, Archbishop of Reims. He it was who defended with the greatest success the authority of Charles the Bald, against those who preferred to him his brother, Louis the German. The bishops supported the kings they had crowned; they governed temporal and spiritual affairs, war and peace; it was Hincmar who

\* After long researches, intended to trace this family back to Childebrand, brother of Charles Martel, it is generally agreed that it was of Saxon origin, since genealogists even wish to give it as founder the celebrated Wittikind. However this may be, this family, established in the centre of Gaul, speedily acquired a great influence there, and was invested in succession with the counties of Paris and Orleans, the county of Anjou, the duchy of France, and several other great fiefs. The name of Capitians was not given to its members till after Hugues Capet.

convoked, in the king's name, the bishops and counts to march against the enemy.

The Emperor Lothair I. had died in a monastery in 855, after sharing the Empire for the last ten years with his son, Louis II., surnamed *the Young*, and giving kingdoms to his other sons, Provence to Charles, and the country contained between the Meuse, Scheldt, Rhine, and Franche Comté to Lothair II. It was called, after the name of its sovereign, *Lotharingia*, whence we have the name of *Lorraine*, which has adhered to it. The decrees of the councils touching the two marriages of Lothair II. occupied the whole of Christendom during fifteen years. Separated by mutual agreement from his wife, Tentberga, and forced to take her back by Pope Adrian II., Lothair went to Rome in order to justify himself. The Pontiff called down the vengeance of Heaven on him if he did not amend his ways. He died within a week, and the whole of his suite in the year. His three sons survived him but a short time; and Louis the German and Charles the Bald divided their estates between them.

On the death of the Emperor Louis II., which event took place in 875, his uncle Charles the Bald seized the imperial crown; but this crown, reduced to a part of Southern Germany and Italy, was, on his brow, but the shadow of that worn by Charlemagne. The Empire was exhausted; the perpetual wars of Charlemagne, the incessantly renewed quarrels of his grandsons, had decimated the martial population during several generations. In the midst of the constantly increasing anarchy, the freemen, preferring security to an independence full of perils, made themselves the vassals of powerful men capable of defending them; and so early as 847, the weak Charles the Bald allowed the edict to be drawn from him, known as the Edict of Mersen, to the effect that every freeman can choose a lord, either the king or one of his vassals, and that none of them would be bound to follow the king to war except against foreigners. The king thus remained powerless and disarmed in civil wars;

Thirty years later, the nobles completed the ruin of imperial and royal authority by obtaining at Kersy from the same King, then Emperor, the celebrated decree which rendered it legal to inherit benefices and offices. For a long time past, the rights of property in the soil had been confounded with the rights of administration

and jurisdiction possessed by the counts or officers of the Emperor. The counts, taking advantage of the general anarchy as well as of the ignorance and sloth of the sovereigns of the first and second races, had in the first place contrived to render their offices irrevocable, after the example of holders of benefices; then they transmitted them to their sons. But no law sanctioned this right of inheritance. Charles the Bald, by legalizing it, dealt the last blow to the authority of the sovereigns. This act of his reign has been bitterly reprovèd by most historians, but in accomplishing it, it is certain that he only yielded to circumstances, and involuntarily consummated a sacrifice which his situation imposed on him. Henceforth, it was not the king who chose the counts, but the counts disposed of the throne. The dismemberment of the Empire was rapidly effected, and a new order of things, the feudal system, was the consequence of this edict—the last important act of the reign of Charles the Bald, who died in the same year (877) at a village on Mount Cenis.

The last descendants of Charlemagne nearly all proved themselves, in weakness and nullity, the rivals of the last Merovingians. Louis II., called the Stammerer,\* and successor of Charles the Bald in Italy and Gaul, lost in turn, through revolts, Italy, Brittany, Lorraine, and Gascony. He recognized the fact that he only owed his title to the election of the lords, bishops, and peoples. He allowed the nobles to fortify their mansions; and during his two years' reign, Pope John VIII., expelled from Italy, came into France, and governed the kingdom.

Louis the Stammerer left three sons, Louis, Carloman, and Charles. The first two were recognized as kings in 879; the elder, Louis III., reigned over the north of France, and Carloman over the south. These two princes lived on good terms; but during their reign the Normans committed frightful ravages. At the same period, Duke Boson, brother-in-law of Charles the Bald, seized on Provence, which was also called Cis-peran Burgundy, of which country he was proclaimed king by an assembly of bishops.

Louis and Carloman both died very young, the first in 882, in an expedition against the Normans; the second in 884, while hunting.

\* This Louis II., King of France and son of Charles the Bald, must not be confounded with the Emperor Louis II., called the Young, and son of Lothair.

Neither left any male descent, but they had a younger brother of the name of Charles, a posthumous son of Louis the Stammerer, and issue of a second marriage. The crown devolved, by hereditary right, on this boy, who was only five years of age at the death of his brother. His youth caused him to be excluded from the throne by the nobles, who elected in his stead as king the Emperor Charles the Fat, son of Louis the German. This prince, by the death of his two brothers, and the three sons of Lothair, his cousins, had inherited Germany and Italy: he joined Gaul to them, and the Empire of Charlemagne was momentarily re-established in his hand. But the hand was an unworthy one. Charles the Fat was only nominally emperor and king; and is only known by the lustre shed by the crown of Charlemagne, imbecility, cowardice, and misfortunes. The Normans braved him, and carried on their daring inroads under his eyes. Paris sustained a memorable siege against them, in which Eudes, Count of Paris, and Robert distinguished themselves; both sons of the famous Robert the Strong, killed twenty years previously, while fighting the same enemies. Their valour and the heroic efforts of Goslin, Bishop of Paris, ensured the safety of the city, while Charles the Fat, at the head of an army assembled to save his people, made a cowardly composition with the foreigners, and allowed them to pillage his richest provinces. A cry of indignation was raised against him on all sides. He was deposed at the Diet of Tribur in 888, and died the same year in indigence, deserted by all his friends.\*

\* Historians have not counted the Emperor Charles the Fat in the list of sovereigns of the name of Charles who reigned in Gaul, because they have regarded his reign as a usurpation. In their eyes the legitimate king was young Charles, son of Louis the Stammerer, who was elected at a later date.

## CHAPTER III.

FROM THE DEATH OF CHARLES THE FAT TO THE EXPULSION OF THE  
CARLOVINGIAN DYNASTY.

888-987.

## I.

GAUL DIVIDED BETWEEN THE RACE OF CHARLEMAGNE AND THAT OF ROBERT  
THE STRONG, UP TO THE ACCESSION OF LOUIS IV.

888-936.

THE definitive partition, which irrevocably completed the dismemberment of the Empire, took place on the death of Charles the Fat. Italy became a separate kingdom: all the country comprised between the Fancelles Mountains (a transverse chain of the Vosges), the sources of the Rhine, and the Pennine Alps, formed, under the name of Upper or Trans-peran Burgundy, a new kingdom, of which Rodolph Wolf was the founder. Prior to this, Boson, brother-in-law of Charles the Bald, had assumed the title of King of Provence, or Cis-peran Burgundy. This kingdom has as its limits the Jura, the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Saône, and the Cevennes.\* Lotharingia, or Lorraine, was restricted between the Fancelles Mountains, the Scheldt, the Rhine, and the German Ocean. Aquitaine† extended to the Pyrenees,

\* The kingdoms of Trans-peran and Cis-peran Burgundy were entirely distinct from the part of old Burgundy situated between the Saône and the Loire, and which received and retained the name of Duchy of Burgundy. In 933 these two kingdoms were formed into one, which took the name of the Kingdom of Arles.

† Carloman, son of Louis the Stammerer, was the last of the Carlovingians who bore the title of King of Aquitaine. This vast state ceased from this time to constitute a kingdom. It had for a lengthened period been divided between powerful families, the most illustrious of which are those of the Counts of Toulouse, founded in the ninth century by Fredelon, the Counts of Poitiers, the Counts of Auvergne, the Marquises of Septimania or Gothia, and the Dukes of Gascony. King Endes had given William the

and the greater part of the territory enclosed between these divers states and Brittany henceforth retained the name of France. About the same period, the Counts of Vermandois extended their power to the north, while the powerful houses of Poitiers and Toulouse sprang up in Aquitaine, and opposed a barrier to the incursions of the Saracens. From this last dismemberment of the Empire of the Franks dates the historic existence of the French nation. On the deposition of Charles the Fat, young Charles, third son of Louis the Stammerer, was only eight years old: his age was a second time the cause of his exclusion, and the nobles, alarmed by a new invasion of the Normans, preferred to him Eudes, Count of Paris, son of Robert the Strong; not through any desire to desert the cause of France, a contemporary historian tells us, but through impatience to march against the enemy. Eudes was already celebrated by his defence of Paris against the Normans: he was elected king in 888.

With the reign of Eudes commenced a long series of civil wars, which was terminated at the end of a century by the definitive exclusion of the Carlovingian race. This prince always had arms in hand, either against the lords of Aquitaine, who tried to render themselves independent, or against Charles, his youthful rival, who was supported by Arnolph, King of Germany. Eudes eventually ceded to him several provinces, and he was about to recognize him as his successor when he died in 898. Charles III. was then proclaimed King of France, and is known by the *soubriquet* of Charles the Simple;\* and history, which is silent as to the majority of events in his reign of twenty-five years, has handed down to us, with his surname, the recollection of his incapacity. The most celebrated act of his life was the cession made by Charles in 912 of the territory afterwards called Normandy, to a formidable Norman chief, who had been disinherited by his father, and banished from Norway, his native land.

Fious, Count of Auvergne, the investiture of the duchy of Aquitaine. On the extinction of that family in 928, the Counts of Toulouse and those of Poitou disputed the prerogatives, and their quarrel stained the south with blood for a long time. At length the Counts of Poitou acquired the title of Dukes of Aquitaine or Guyenne, which remained in their house up to the marriage of Eleanor of Aquitaine with Henry Plantagenet I. King of England (1151).

\* The Carlovingian kings of the name of Charles come in the following order:—Charles I., or Charlemagne; Charles II., or the Bald, son of Louis the Débonnaire; Charles III., or the Simple, posthumous son of Louis the Stammerer.

This chief, who had previously desolated Gaul by perpetual invasions, is celebrated in history by the name of Rollo, and was the first Duke of Normandy. He paid homage to the King, was converted to Christianity, and divided his vast territory into fiefs. His warriors, whom he kept down by severe laws, became the fathers of a great people which was the firmest bulwark of France against the invasions of the northern races.

Numerous revolts troubled the end of this reign. For sixty years the French were divided between two families of sovereigns, that of Charlemagne and that of King Eudes. The nobles reproached Charles with giving all his favour to his minister Haganon, whom he had raised from an obscure rank to place him over them, and who at times carried his familiarity so far as to take off the King's hat and place it on his own head. The chief of the malcontents was the brother of King Eudes, Robert, Duke of France,\* who repented that he had not disputed the succession to his brother with Charles the Simple. This Duke formed a league against Haganon: then he told the King that he would not suffer an unworthy favourite to be preferred to the nobles of the kingdom, and that, unless Charles sent him back to his original position, he would hang him without mercy. The King despised this menace. Robert then decreed his deposition with the nobles of the land, and assured himself of the adherence of the King of Germany, Henry the Fowler: he then entered Soissons with a band of conspirators, penetrated to the prince's apartments, and made him a prisoner. On hearing of this, Hervé, Archbishop of Reims, faithful to the cause of Charles, armed his vassals, entered Soissons at their head, broke open the palace gates, reached the King, dispersed his guardians, and, taking the hand of the unfortunate prince, said to him, "Come, my king, and command thy servants." He took him away at once, and conducted him to Reims. Charles the Simple, thus delivered by the Archbishop, retired to the heart of Belgian Gaul,† the cradle of his family, and took up his residence in

\* This duchy, which, it is said, was conceded in 861 to Robert the Strong by Charles the Bald, comprised, in addition to the counties of Paris and Orleans, the Galliçois, the Chartrans, the Blaisois, Perche, Anjou, Touraine, Maine, and Beauvoisis.

† This was the name given in the tenth century to the greater portion of the kingdom of Lorraine.

the city of Tongrès. But his reign was at an end : his deposition was pronounced by the nobles at an assembly held at Soissons in 920, and Robert was elected king, and consecrated at the Church of St. Remi, in Reims (922). Charles called his partizans around him. He interested the Belgians or Lorraines in his misfortunes : he marched at their head to meet his rival, and his army encountered that of Robert, near the old royal residence of Attigny, in Champagne. Here a sanguinary action was fought, in which King Robert was killed, while fighting. Charles was flying when he heard of Robert's death, but he did not take advantage of this circumstance to secure the crown on his own head ; and not daring to trust to his subjects, he returned with his army to Lorraine.

Robert, Duke of France, was succeeded by his son, the celebrated Hugues the Great, or the White, who made kings and would not be one himself. This powerful lord had the deposition of Charles the Simple confirmed, and decreed the crown to his brother-in-law, Raoul, or Rodolph, Duke of Burgundy, and father-in-law of King Robert, who accepted the crown against his wish. Charles the Simple was then drawn into a snare by Herbert, Count of Vermandois, who seized him and retained him a prisoner at Péronne.

Raoul, elected in 923, reigned for eleven years. He had to contend against the Normans, whom he repulsed, and against the perfidious Herbert, who, master of the person of King Charles, wished to domineer over King Raoul, and placed no bounds on his demands. He asked for the county of Leon, and when it was refused him, he set Charles at liberty again. But soon after he again sought the favour of Hugues the Great, who had crowned Raoul ; and on becoming reconciled with him imprisoned the unfortunate Charles for the second time. Raoul, however, moved by a feeling of equity, the chronicler says, or by compassion, went to visit the captured king, and begged him to pardon him. He did not restore to him the supreme authority ; but he gave him back, with his liberty, the royal residences of Ponthiou and Attigny. Charles the Simple languished for some time, and died in 929, crushed by sorrow and illness.

Raoul reigned for seven years longer, and the close of his reign was troubled by a bloody war, which Hugues the White, Duke of France, waged against the Count of Vermandois and the Duke of Lorraine.



The King of France, suzerain of Hugues, and he of Germany, Henry the Fowler, suzerain of the Duke of Lorraine, were drawn into this war, and appeared more like allies of their vassals than as sovereigns.

Germany and Gaul were a prey to frightful calamities: foreign invasion added its scourge to those of intestine dissensions, and the Hungarians ravaged Germany. These ferocious hordes, vanquished in 933 by Henry the Fowler in the celebrated battle of Merseburg, returned two years later, crossed Germany, and penetrated into Burgundy. King Raoul marched to meet them. At the rumour of his approach the Hungarians evacuated Burgundy and fell back on Italy. Raoul died the following year. He left no sons to succeed him on the throne, which no member of his family inherited. His duchy of Burgundy, the real seat of his power, did not pass in its entirety to his natural heirs. Hugues the Black, his brother, only obtained a part of it; his brother-in-law, Hugues the Great, Count of Paris, took advantage of a civil war to seize the larger portion of it. This powerful noble, son of King Robert, nephew of King Eudes, and brother-in-law of the last King Raoul, governed, as Duke of France, all the countries situated between Normandy and Brittany in the west, the Loire in the south, and the Meuse in the north. He owed the name of *Great* rather to the vast extent of his states than to his personal merit; and he surpassed so greatly in power all the lords of Gaul that he only required to stretch out his hand to the crown in order to ensure the possession of it. "But," writes the author who appears to us to have judged the situation most correctly, "Hugues seems to have considered the power of an hereditary lord in his fief as far more satisfactory to ambition than the prerogatives of an elective king among independent vassals. He had already extended considerably the inheritance of his family, and intended to extend it further. But he wished to give all his usurpations the sanction of the royal authority, and he judged that they would be far more respected if he placed between the other vassals and himself the name of a legitimate king, whose master he would be, than if he ran the risk of seeing the acquisitions he had made contested, as well as his own title to the crown. All the nobles of the south of Gaul and Aquitaine had wished, in the last wars, to

remain faithful to the blood of Charlemagne; and Hugues calculated on governing them in the name of a descendant of that Emperor.”\*

Hugues the Great, therefore, thought of Louis, son of Charles the Simple. This young prince, who was sixteen years of age, was living at the time in England privately with his mother, the sister of the Anglo-Saxon King Athelstane, and he owed to this circumstance the surname of Louis *d'Outre-Mer*, or from across the sea. Hugues gave him the crown by agreement with William Longsword, second Duke of Normandy, and with the lords of old Neustria and Aquitaine. A solemn embassy conveyed their wishes to the court of the King his master, inviting him to come and reign in France. Louis accepted the crown, and was consecrated at Reims in the year 936, at the same period when Otho the Great, of the House of Saxony, succeeded Henry the Fowler, his father, on the imperial throne of Germany.

## II.

GAUL UNDER THE LAST CARLOVINGIANS: LOUIS IV., CALLED D'OUTRE-MER, LOTHAIRE, AND LOUIS V., CALLED THE SLOTHFUL.

THE royal domain was at this period limited to the county of Laon. There alone Louis IV. reigned *de facto* as well as nominally; everywhere else in Gaul the dukes and counts were more sovereign than the king. Hugues the Great, while doing him homage, did not intend to free him from his guardianship. The young monarch himself claimed his independence: he had the soul of a king, if he had not the power; and his reign was a stormy and perpetual struggle.

A formidable invasion of the Hungarians marked its opening. A numerous horde of this savage people passed through the kingdom and back again like a devastating torrent; and this scourge suspended for a time the rupture on the point of breaking out between Louis and his powerful vassal. Hugues, upon seeing the King escape from his influence, made a close league with several lords of northern Gaul, and more especially with William, Duke of the Normans, Arnolph, Count

\* Sismondi, *Histoire des Français*, Part ii. Cap. iv.

of Flanders, and the same Herbert, Count of Vermandois, who had for so long a period kept Charles the Simple prisoner.

The Lorrainers, at this period, had revolted against the Emperor Otho the Great, King of Germany, their suzerain, and transferred their homage to Louis d'Outre-Mer, who accepted it. A war broke out between the two kings; and in this struggle the confederate nobles, vassals of Louis, allied themselves against him with the King of Germany, whom they proclaimed King of the Gauls at Attigny. Otho did not retain this title; but he recovered Lorraine and made peace with Louis, the husband of his sister Gerberge,\* a princess of rare merit, who eventually employed her influence with success to maintain friendly terms between her husband and brother. The struggle of Louis against the rebel lords was prolonged for two years more, and was ended by the intervention of Pope Asapete and the Emperor Otho. The latter reconciled Hugues the Great with the King.

The kingdom was agitated at this period by a famous quarrel between two priests, who disputed the archiepiscopal see of Reims. One was Hugues of Vermandois, son of Count Herbert, who was consecrated almost on leaving the cradle, and protected by the Count of Paris. The other, elected by the people, and a partizan of the King, was the Bishop Artaud. The latter was for a time expelled from his see, and Reims liberated itself from the royal authority. This quarrel was prolonged during the entire reign of Louis d'Outre-Mer. It occupies a considerable place in the annals of the epoch; and in order to understand its importance we must bear in mind that the bishops were, in Gaul during the tenth century, the real masters of the cities in which they had their sees, and that a town at that time was frequently a state, and sometimes almost a kingdom.

In these barbarous times the violence of the nobles did not stop at assassination, and the law was impotent against the abuses of brute force. The prince who, next to Hugues the Great, was the most formidable vassal of the crown, William Longsword, Duke of Normandy, himself fell the victim of an odious snare. He was cowardly murdered by the emissaries of Arnolph, Count of Flanders, and the murderer,

\* Hugues the Great, Count of Paris and Duke of France, had married another sister of the Emperor Otho, of the name of Hedwig.

whom the royal justice could not reach, remained unpunished.\* The conduct of Louis d'Outre-Mer was not at all loyal in this affair. The Normans had recognized as William's successor a natural son of that prince, the youthful Richard, ten years of age, who was afterwards surnamed *the Fearless*. Louis hastened to confirm him in the honours and privileges of the ducal rank, and then asked and obtained that the boy should be entrusted to him for the purpose of receiving at his court an education worthy of his fortunes. Master of his person, Louis, in agreement with Hugues the Great, thought of depriving him of his duchy. They hoped to divide Normandy between them, and made an alliance for that purpose. These culpable hopes were foiled. Osmond, governor of the prince, escaped the surveillance of his keepers by a stratagem. He concealed Richard in a truss of hay, placed him thus on his horse, and, starting at a gallop, reached during the night the castle of Coucy, where he placed the prince in surety. Louis, when he found Richard was at liberty, openly renounced the idea of despoiling him, and Hugues, having nothing further to hope from the King's alliance, became his enemy again.

Louis, in his turn, became the victim of a trick on the part of the Normans. Receiving an invitation from them, he proceeded to Rouen, and the reception they gave him completely deceived him. The city of Bayeux had at the time as governor an ex-Danish king of the name of Harold, who had been expelled from his states by his son. This Harold requested a conference of King Louis, who went unsuspectingly with a small suite to meet him at the ford of Herluin. Here, at a signal from the Norman chief, an armed band suddenly fell on the royal escort, dispersed, and put it to flight. The King's squire was killed in defending him; and Louis, carried across country by a swift horse, re-entered the walls of Rouen alone, where, instead of a refuge, he found a prison. The inhabitants, who were accomplices in Harold's perfidy, seized the King's person, and made him a prisoner. The Count of Paris pretended to take an interest in the fate of the captive monarch. He interfered in his favour, and demanded as hostages his two sons of Gerberge, their mother. Gerberge would only give one. Hugues induced the Normans to accept him in exchange for King

\* Richer gives us to understand that Hugues the Great, and even the Emperor Otho, were the instigators of this murder.

Louis, and the latter was delivered 'over by them into his hands. Hugues then threw off the mask, and, having the King in his power, he broke his word, kept him captive, and repulsed the powerful intervention of Edmund, King of the Anglo-Saxons, in favour of his nephew.\* Hugues unworthily abused his advantage; he overwhelmed the unhappy prince with reproaches, and forced him to surrender Laon, his finest city, as his ransom.

Delivered, at this price, the King proceeded to Compiègne, where his wife Gerberge, celebrated for her virtues, was awaiting him, and several bishops and a few faithful friends were assembled. Then he could no longer restrain his grief. "Hugues, Hugues!" he exclaimed, "what property hast thou robbed me of; how many evils hast thou done to me! Thou hast seized on the city of Reims; thou hast defrauded me of Laon. In those two cities I met with a good reception, and they were my sole ramparts. My captive father was delivered by death from misfortunes like those by which I am crushed; and I, reduced to the same extremities, can only recall to mind the appearance of the royalty of my ancestors. I feel a regret at living, and I am not allowed to die!"† Louis, in his distress, implored and obtained the assistance of his brother-in-law, the Emperor Otho the Great, King of Germany, and of Conrad the Pacific, King of Transperan Burgundy and Provence. With the assistance of their armies, he recaptured the city of Reims, where he re-established Archbishop Artaud in the archiepiscopal see. Then he invested the city of Laon, and seized it by surprise.

A council, at which appeared the Kings of France and Germany, assembled at Ingelheim, under the protection of the imperial armies. The principal object of the meeting was, on the one hand to suspend the hostilities of Count Hugues against the King, and, on the other, to settle the too famous dispute between Bishop Artaud and his competitor. The latter was deposed, and Pope Asapete confirmed this decision. The council prohibited Hugues from henceforth taking up arms against his lord the King; and the Count, refusing to obey, was excommunicated.

\* Louis d'Outre-Mer's mother was sister of the Anglo-Saxon Kings Athelstane and Edmund.

† Richer, *Histoire de son Temps*.

The anathema of the Church, far from disarming this powerful vassal, rendered him more violent and formidable. Joining the Normans, he ravaged the lands of King Louis, fired his castles, and carried pillage and murder into his towns. Louis continued the contest with more courage than success. At length, recognizing his powerlessness, he applied to the Pope, King Othó, and the bishops to effect a reconciliation between him and Hugues. They obtained the signature of a truce. Hugues once again recognized the royal authority, and swore fidelity. Louis d'Outre-Mer did not long enjoy the repose which this peace seemed to promise him. He saw several parts of Romanic France, among others the Vermandois, the diocese of Reims, and Laon, ravaged by the Hungarians, and survived the invasion of these barbarians but a short time. While proceeding from Laon to Reims, a wolf crossed his road. The King dashed in pursuit, but his horse fell, and he was mortally wounded. He died at the age of 33, in September, 954, esteemed for his valour and talents, which, under other circumstances, would have sufficed to keep the crown on his head. The race of Charlemagne displayed its last lustre in the person of Louis d'Outre-Mer: so long as he lived, there was still a king in France, although there was no kingdom left.

Louis IV. left two sons, of youthful years, Lothaire and Charles. Their mother, Gerberge, sister of Otho the Great, King of Germany, understood that without the assistance of the Count of Paris the throne would slip from her family. She, therefore, asked his support; and the same motives which had induced Hugues to crown the father determined him also to crown the son, from whom he expected greater docility. Lothaire, elder son of Louis d'Outre-Mer, was, therefore, proclaimed king at Reims at the close of 954, under the protection of Hugues the Great; and he recognized this service by adding to the possessions of Hugues the duchy of Aquitaine, with which he invested him, to the prejudice of the orphan children of Raymond Pons, Count of Toulouse, whom he despoiled of their father's heritage. Hugues at once led an army into Aquitaine; and, after an unsuccessful expedition, he was preparing a second, when death surprised him at the Castle of Dourdon, on the Orge (956). During his lifetime, there was no other power in Gaul comparable to his; he employed it with-

out moderation, but not without prudence. He was the real founder of the grandeur of his family, but he did not attach his name to any useful and really glorious work; and, if he opened for his son the road to the throne on which his father and uncle had already sat, he also contributed to dishonour royalty, by teaching the nobles, through his own example, how to brave and oppress those whom they had crowned.

Hugues the Great left the duchy of France and the county of Paris to his son Hugues, who was afterwards named *Capet*.\* Henry, his second son, inherited the duchy of Burgundy. Both were children at their father's death. Hugues, the elder, was hardly ten years of age. Their mother Hedwig, and Queen Gerberge, mother and guardian of the young King Lothaire, were sisters; their brother was Otho, King of Germany, and they placed their children under his protection.

This prince, of the House of Saxony, was, at that period, the most illustrious and powerful prince in Europe. He had conquered Italy from King Beranger II., and he received the imperial crown from the hands of the Pope, as Charlemagne had done. Through his great qualities and victories, he restored all its vigour to the Germanic monarchy. His alliances added to his greatness, and gave him an influence over the greater part of Western Europe. Saint Bruno, his brother, governed Lorraine;† his brother-in-law, Conrad the Pacific, reigned in Trans-peran Burgundy and Provence: lastly, his sisters, one Queen, the other Duchess of France, received advice and instruction from him. His fortune and genius brought together the scattered members of the old Empire, and the latter appeared to be born again in his hands. This great monarch died in 973. His successor was his son, Otho II.; and his death was followed by sanguinary disorders in several countries which he had kept in peace or subjection by the terror of his arms and his name.

\* There are very many versions of the etymology of this surname, which became the patronymic of the third race. One of the best accredited is that which derives it from *chapotus*, (hood), because Hugues, among his other titles, was Abbot of St. Martin of Torss, and wore the insignia.

† Lotharingia, or Lorraine, had been annexed to the German crown about the year 923, by the Emperor Henry I., called the Fowler. On becoming a province of the Empire, its government was given by Otho to his brother, St. Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne. The latter divided it into two parts, Upper Lorraine, in the Mosellaise, and Lower Lorraine: the latter was almost entirely formed of the country which is at the present day Belgium.

The bonds of blood and gratitude attached King Lothaire and Hugues Capet, Duke of France and Count of Paris, to the Emperor Otho II., son of the great man who had protected their youth: and both formed fresh bonds with his family by each marrying one of his sisters. Still, the peace between the two kings was of short duration: a dispute broke out on the subject of Belgian Gaul or Lower Lorraine, to which country both asserted a claim. Lorraine, divided by Otho the Great into Upper and Lower Lorraine, and annexed to the German crown by his predecessor, Henry the Fowler, had since been considered a province of the Empire. Charles, brother of King Lothaire, had inherited a few fiefs from his mother; and after the death of Otho the Great, he claimed them with arms in his hand. The Emperor Otho II., who was troubled on his other frontiers, offered Charles the duchy of Lower Lorraine, to be held by him as a fief of the Germanic crown. Charles accepted it, and Otho believed that he had satisfied King Lothaire by this concession: but the latter, on learning the following year that the Emperor was unsuspectingly residing at Aix-la-Chapelle, formed the plan of surprising him there; and an expedition was unanimously decided on against the King of Germany. The army, immediately assembled, was marched upon the Meuse, and King Otho was all but surprised in his capital. Lothaire's soldiers occupied the city and palace: the royal tables were overthrown, the imperial insignia removed, and the bronze eagle which Charlemagne had placed above his palace with outstretched wings and turned to the west, was made to face the south-east, as a symbol of the precipitate flight of the Germans. Here Lothaire's success stopped, and he led back his army without obtaining any serious advantage.

Otho II. took revenge for his disgrace: he invaded Gaul at the head of a formidable army of Germans, and, ravaging the whole country on his passage, advanced up to the gates of Paris. Here, on the summit of Montmartre, he made his soldiers strike up the *Cantic of the Martyrs*, so as to be heard by the inhabitants, and Count Hugues, who defended the capital against him. This useless bravado was the sole satisfaction which the King of Germany obtained. Despairing of entering Paris, and not daring to remain among a hostile population, he returned to his states; and his retreat, which was disturbed by Lothaire and Hugues, was as precipitate as his attack had been.

Lothaire understood, however, that there was greater safety for him



in the alliance of the King of Germany, than in his resentment: he, therefore, surrendered to him his claims on Lorraine, and they were reconciled. From this moment Hugues Capet and Lothaire became enemies. But Hugues soon saw all the dangers with which the union of the two kings threatened him, and he made up his mind to divide them. He proceeded secretly to King Otho, concluded peace with him, and on his return passed in disguise through Lothaire's possessions, contriving to escape his traps. The King and the Duke employed perfidious machinations against each other, and the nations suffered for a long time from their enmity. At length recognizing their impotence to destroy each other, they made peace, and were ostensibly reconciled.

Lothaire, during his lifetime, shared the throne with his son Louis, who was scarce thirteen years of age. This young prince was crowned in 978 at Compiègne, by Adalberon, Archbishop of Reims, in the presence and with the consent of Hugues Capet and the nobles of the kingdom. Lothaire attempted to secure Aquitaine for his son, by giving him as wife Adelaide, princess of Southern Gaul, and widow of Raymond, Duke of Septimania.\* But Louis did not redeem his dissipated habits by any royal quality. The nobles of Aquitaine did not recognize his authority: his wife herself deserted him, and he was in a perilous situation, when King Lothaire entered Aquitaine at the head of an army, and brought back his son.

Otho II. died at this period (983) at Rome, leaving a son only three years of age, who was crowned by the name of Otho III. Lothaire took advantage of the disorders which paralyzed the strength of Germany during this lad's minority, once more to assert his rights over Lorraine: he led an army into that country, besieged and captured Verdun. On returning to the city of Laon, he was meditating a new expedition into Lorraine, when he fell ill and expired (986), in the forty-fifth year of his life, and the thirty-third of his reign.†

Louis V., the last king of his race, merely passed over the throne. Comparing his weakness with the power of his vassal, Hugues Capet,

\* Several chronicles state that Louis espoused a princess of Southern Gaul, of the name of Blanche, who eventually poisoned him. We have followed the far more detailed version of Richer.

† We are told in several chronicles that Lothaire was poisoned by Queen Emma, his wife, who was guilty of adultery.

he went to him; and said, "My father, when dying, recommended me to govern the kingdom with your counsels and your help. He assured me that with your assistance I should possess the riches, armies, and strong places of the kingdom: be good enough, therefore, to give me your advice. I place in you my hopes, my will, my fortune." The King thus appeared himself to lay his crown at the feet of his vassal. Still, the historian who has preserved these words for us, adds that the Duke allowed himself to be dragged involuntarily by the King into a war against Adalberon, Archbishop of Reims, to whom the King imputed, among other crimes, that of having facilitated the last invasion of Otho II. during his father's lifetime; and having assured his safety and that of the Germanic army by assisting him in his retreat. The King and Hugues Capet, therefore, laid siege to Reims, and menaced the city and the Bishop with the severest punishment, unless the latter consented to purge himself publicly from the accusations brought against him. The Metropolitan promised to justify himself and appear on an appointed day; he gave hostages, and the siege was raised.

Another prelate, of the name of Adalberon, Bishop of Laon, was, like him of Reims, exposed to persecutions during this reign. Accused by the public clamour of adultery with Emma, the widow of Lothaire, he was expelled from his see. The Queen shared his disgrace, and both escaped from their enemies by flight; but they fell into the hands of Charles, brother of Lothaire, Duke of Lower Lorraine, and he threw them into prison. Hugues Capet, in the meanwhile, was secretly forming engagements to the family reigning in Germany; he drew more closely the bonds attaching him to Otho, and gained over to his ambitious views the Empress Theophania, guardian of the youthful Otho III.

The crisis was approaching. Louis V. had a fall at Senlis, the consequences of which were mortal, and he expired only one year after his father's death, May 22, 987, and was buried at Compiègne.

The nobles of the kingdom, after being present at the King's funeral, assembled in council to elect his successor. Louis had left no children; but his uncle Charles, Duke of Lower Lorraine, was his next heir, and put forward his claim to the crown. He had Hugues Capet for a rival, and had made a dangerous enemy of the Metropolitan, the same Archbishop Adalberon who, exposed to the wrath of

the late king had promised to justify himself publicly of the crimes imputed to him. Adalberon appeared at the assembly of Compiègne. No one having come forward to support the accusation, the Bishop was acquitted, and admitted to deliberate on the affairs of the State. Taking his place among the nobles, he voted for the election being deferred for a few days, and convened a general assembly at Senlis. According to the testimony of Richer, this assembly was numerous and imposing: at it were present Frank, Breton, Norman, Aquitanian, Gothic, Spanish, and Gascon nobles. The Archbishop of Reims addressed them. "Charles," he said, "has his partisans, who declare him worthy of the throne by the right which his parents transmitted to him; but the kingdom is not acquired by hereditary right, and no one ought to be raised to the throne except a man who is not only of illustrious birth, but possessing wisdom: a man sustained by faith and greatness of soul. Are these qualities to be found in this Charles, who is not governed by faith, who is enervated by a shameful torpor, who has sunk the dignity of his person so far as to serve without shame a foreign king, and marry a wife inferior to him, drawn from the rank of simple warriors? \* How could the grand duke suffer a woman, selected from among his knights, to become queen, and domineer over him. If you desire the misfortune of the state, then choose Charles! If you desire its welfare, crown the excellent Duke Hugues. Choose him, and you will find we have a protector, not only of the republic, but also of everybody's interests." Hugues was raised to the throne, unanimously crowned at Noyon, on June 1, 987, by Adalberon, and recognized as king by the different nations of Gaul.

\* If Charles had been very powerful of himself the reproach made by the Archbishop would have been valueless, especially in the mouth of an enemy; it being the constant practice of lords at that period to possess simultaneously fiefs under several suzerains. But Charles had no personal authority; the desert domain he inherited in France from his brother only consisted of a few towns; he derived all his strength from his fief, and, as Duke of Lower Lorraine, he was entirely dependent on his suzerain, the King of Germany; hence there was reason to fear lest the Germanic crown might weigh too heavy in the destinies of France. Charles, moreover, had injured himself in the sight of the nobles of the kingdom, by doing homage for his duchy to the King of Germany at the very time when the suzerainty of that fief was claimed by King Lothaire. These reasons were among those that led the nobles to prefer Hugues to Charles as king, and there is nothing to support the idea of an asserted opposition to a dynasty of Germanic origin.

The fall of the Carolingians was not, as has been stated, the result of a popular opposition to the dynasty, which was deposed by a national feeling as founded on conquest. This opinion, the error of an illustrious historian, and which has been sustained with all the power of talent, is not confirmed by contemporary testimony. If it be true to say that Charles Martel penetrated into Western France at the head of new Germanic bands, it must be also allowed that he found there a people already half German through its government, its laws, and a conquest prior by more than two centuries. The chronicles of the period bear witness that the descendants of the Gauls and Germans only formed, in the tenth century, one people in the northern part of ancient Gaul, and that the traditional respect for the blood of Charlemagne had survived the unity of his empire. In the decomposition of the latter, in the absence of any general idea, and when society was broken up all around, it was natural that the King should be engaged in a contest with his powerful subjects, and that the peoples should support their direct lords against everybody, even were it the King. The same fact has been reproduced in other countries, and, in order to understand it, it is not necessary to base it on the hereditary hatred of the two races. Some writers have pointed out a double cause of dislike of the Carolingians, and popular sympathy for the descendants of Robert the Strong, in the Germanic origin of the former, and in the support they at times asked of a foreign potentate, the King of Germany, a man of their own race and blood. But long before the accession of the third race to the crown, the family of the Carolingians had disappeared from the Imperial throne and that of Germany. It is also now notorious that the family of Robert the Strong was quite as Germanic as that of Charlemagne; and if the Carolingian kings of Gaul had the kings of Germany as allies on various occasions, they found in them at others their most formidable enemies, and finally, towards the close, the Duke of France, and the King, his suzerain, were seen seeking, with equal ardour, the support of the Germanic crown in their contest.

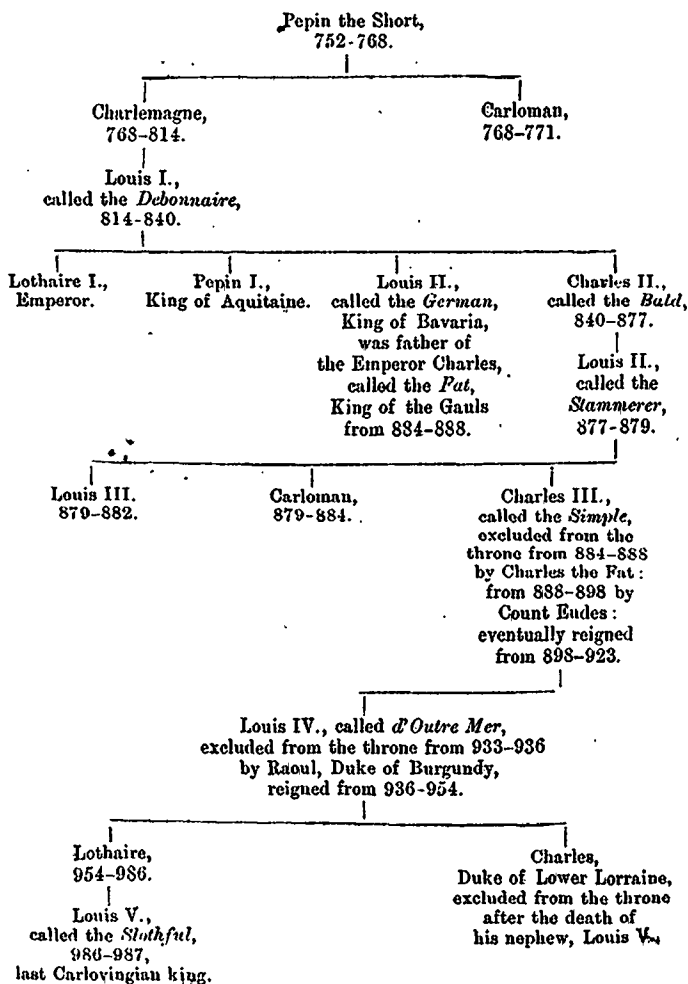
The real explanation of the accession of the third race will be found in the state of society, which was assuming another form, and being established on a new basis. Charlemagne had attempted to impress

on the monarchy a grand character of unity, and these ideas of unity and the concentration of power were the dream and object of the efforts of his successors, either on the Imperial throne, or at the head of the states into which the Empire was broken up, but these proud pretensions were no longer tenable in Gaul at the end of the tenth century: they were opposed to the tendencies of the age, and formed a singular contrast with the feebleness of those who were crushed by the royal title. A subterranean revolution, from which feudalism emerged, was slowly accomplished; another society was formed; and any new society can only live and prosper, so long as it has at its head a representative of the principles that constituted it. Hugues Capet, the most powerful of the feudal lords, was in France the natural representative of the new social order based on feudalism: and it was especially for that reason that he was elected king.

The tenth century is one of the most obscure and disastrous epochs in the history of France: everything became weak simultaneously, the pious zeal and virtues of the clergy, the authority of the laws, and the independence of the inhabitants of cities. The Saracens, Hungarians, Germans, and Normans desolated the country, and burnt the cities; the latter were no longer the seat of government or of subaltern administrations, and the residences of the rich. The castles alone afforded a refuge against foreign invasions and civil wars, and to them retired all those who enjoyed any authority; there, too, justice was done, and the courts were held. Commerce disappeared, and with it the citizen and industrious classes: independent men, rich landowners and manufacturers, were succeeded in most of the cities by a trembling and servile population: the tradesman had no longer any fixed residence; he travelled from manor to manor, carrying his wares with him, and concealing his profit in terror. Around each castle sprang up wretched cabins, inhabited by serfs, who carried on mechanical trades, or cultivated the soil on behalf of the lord: nearly the whole people consisted of serfs, at the mercy of the nobles, and victims of each political commotion. The frightful misery and general desolation seemed at that time to justify the popular belief that the end of the world was at hand, and that it would happen in the year 1000. Still, at the moment of this decadence, and when the old social order perished, another rose on its ruins, founded by the small number of

persons who had remained free and powerful, in the protection of their castles. This new order of things, which received the name of *feudalism*, had taken deep root during the past century, and despite its immense abuses prevented the utter dissolution of every social tie, and a return to the barbarism of remote periods.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE CARLOVINGIAN KINGS.



## SECOND EPOCH.

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THE FEUDAL MONARCHY, FROM HUGUES CAPET  
TO FRANCIS I.

987-1515.





## BOOK I.

### FROM THE ACCESSION OF HUGUES CAPET TO THE DEATH OF ST. LOUIS.

THE SUPREMACY AND GRADUAL WEAKENING OF THE ARISTOCRACY—PROGRESS  
OF THE ROYAL POWER—CONQUESTS OF THE CROWN—THE CRUSADES—  
ENFRANCHISEMENT OF THE COMMUNES—ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JUDI-  
CIAL ORDER.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### EXPOSITION OF THE FEUDAL SYSTEM.

THE accession of Hugues Capet had for result the development of the feudal system by consolidating it. Under the previous race, the lords had rendered the cession of benefices irrevocable, and made them hereditary in their families; and as the German customs authorized the possessors of estates to regard as their own property not only the soil acquired, but also everything that existed on the soil at the moment of the cession or conquest, they soon persuaded themselves that they had a right to exercise civil, judicial, and military power in their domains, by virtue of their sole title as owners. Authority was consequently established by possession, and, by a strange fiction, power was attached to the land itself. Such was in France the origin of feudalism.

Under the second race, the kings, ever sacrificing the future to the present, had in turn abandoned to the dukes and counts all the regal or royal rights—those of raising troops, administering justice, coining money, making peace or war, and fortifying themselves; and from the moment when they recognized, by the edict of Kersy, the transmission of offices to the next heir as legal, the dukes and counts

regarded themselves as possessors of the provinces in which their will was law. While *de facto* independent of the crown, the majority, however, still remained subordinate to it by the bond of the oath of fidelity. They distributed, of their own free will, domains among the nobles, who received them on faith and homage: and the latter granted inferior benefices to freemen on the same title. A great number of independent proprietors, alarmed by the ravages of external foes, and the commotion of the civil discords, sought support from their powerful neighbours, and obtained it by doing them homage for their lands, which they received back from the lords to whom they offered them as fiefs, the possession of which henceforth entailed the obligation of rendering faithful service to the suzerain. Thus, he who gave a territorial estate\* in fief became the suzerain of him who received it on this title, and the latter was called a vassal, or liegeman. The landholders were thus considered, throughout the entire extent of the kingdom of France, as subjects, or vassals to each other. This system, which extended to the provinces, as well as to simple private domains, established a connecting link between all parts of the territory. In the feudal hierarchy the first rank belonged to the country or state which bore the title of kingdom; and this title, on the coronation of Hugues Capet, was acquired for the ancient duchy of France, a great fief, which, on account of its central position, the warlike character of its inhabitants, and the extinction of the kingly title in the neighbouring states, was in a position eventually to obtain a real supremacy.

The feudal system rapidly embraced old Gaul, Italy, and Germany, and afterwards spread over the whole of Europe: it prepared the formation of the great states, and, during two hundred and forty years, took the place of the social bond, and of legislation.

The first portion of this period resembles an interregnum, during which the king was only distinguished from the other lords by honorary prerogatives. Each fortress of any importance gave its owner rank among the sovereigns; and as the civil discords made

\* It must not be supposed that land alone could be the object of a feudal concession. Immaterial things, such as a large number of rights, were also constituted into fiefs, and conceded on the same conditions. Amongst these may be mentioned the rights of fishing and hunting, of established taxes on highways or rivers, and the exclusive right of grinding corn, &c.

the nobles feel the necessity of attaching to themselves a considerable number of men for their personal security, they divided their domains into a multitude of lots, which they gave in fief; granting to their vassals the permission to fortify themselves, which they had themselves wrung from Louis the Stammerer; and a great number of castles were erected round the principal fortress. It is the general opinion that doing homage for a fief ennobled; and the nobility thus sprang up, to a great extent, from the ninth to the tenth century. The right granted to subjects of providing for their own defence arrested the devastations of foreigners; strengthened the national character; revived a healthy feeling of self-respect among the members of a numerous class; and authorized them in demanding equal politeness from those from whom they held estates, as well as from those to whom they ceded them, the feudal contract being annulled by the violation of the obligations contracted on either side. This new subordination was partly based on the faith of the oath; and respect in sworn fidelity and loyalty thus became one of the distinctive traits in the character of the nobility.\*

The principal obligations contracted by the vassal under this system were to bear arms for a certain number of days on every military expedition; to recognize the jurisdiction of the suzerain; and to pay the feudal aids—a species of tax raised for the ransom of the lord, if he were made prisoner; or on the occasion of the marriage of his eldest daughter; or when his son was made a knight. Whenever a fief passed from one to another, either by inheritance or sale, a fee was paid to the suzerain, who, on his side, promised his liegeman justice and protection. On these conditions, the vassal was independent on his own land, and enjoyed the same rights, and was bound by the same duties towards his own vassals, as his suzerain.

In this organization of feudal society the old pleas of the nation were altered into county pleas, in which the vassals united under the presidency of the count, and judicial combat was brought back into use, and became the basis of jurisprudence between gentlemen.

\* The following is the formula of the oath pronounced by the vassal on asking the investiture of his fief :—“ Sire, I come to your homage, in your faith, and become your man of mouth and hands, and swear, and promise to you faith and loyalty toward all, and against all, and to keep your right in my power.”

From this time, the different codes of laws, which had so long subsisted among the various indigenous or conquered nations of Gaul, entirely disappeared. It was generally admitted that no man could be tried save by his peers, by which word was meant vassals of the same rank. The great vassals of the crown—the Dukes of Normandy, Aquitaine, and Burgundy, and the Counts of Flanders, Toulouse, and Champagne—were nominated *peers of France*; and to these six lay peers were eventually added six ecclesiastical peers, who were the Archbishops of Reims and Sens, and the Bishops of Noyon, Beauvais, Châlons, and Langres. When a peer of France was summoned before the rest, the king presided at the trial. All these laws, conventions, and usages only concerned the nobility: the people were counted as nothing; and the nobles and gentry, isolated from them in their habitations and through their privileges, were even more distinguished by their dress and weapons. It was thus that they kept the wretched and defenceless population in subjection. The military art underwent a change, and the cavalry henceforth became the *strength of armies*: bodily exercises, equitation, the management of the lance and sword, were the sole occupation of the nobility; and the sale of arms, one of the principal branches of trade in Europe. This first period of the feudal confederation witnessed the birth of chivalry, respect for women, and *modern languages* and poetry.

Such were the chief effects of this system as concerns the general policy and the interests of the nobility. We have now to examine it in its relations with the Church and the people.

After the invasion of Gaul by the Franks, religion, so far as the mass of the people were concerned, mainly consisted in external ceremonies, and in the veneration of relics, of images of the Virgin and the saints, and of pictures representing the mysteries of the faith, the actions of Christ and of the Apostles, and the first believers. The magnificence of the worship exercised a great influence; and the priests, under the Carlovingians, imposed on the people, and more especially upon the nobles, by means of their riches and their power. But the Church which, in the fifth and sixth centuries, had alone resisted the invasion of barbarism, was less powerful to restrain the corruption entailed by an excess of wealth.

Large numbers of barbarians had entered the ranks of the clergy, and virtue and learning almost entirely disappeared from amongst them from the eighth to the tenth century. In default of these claims on the respect of men, the only means the Church possessed of preserving its ascendancy in these unhappy times was to remain rich and powerful; and at the period of the progressive establishment of the feudal system, it saw with terror the great vassals encroaching on its domains. The clergy soon comprehended that, as all the authority was in the hands of the possessors of fiefs, they must themselves form part of the new confederation. They therefore did homage for the Church domains, and then divided them into numerous lots, which they converted into fiefs, thus obtaining suzerains and vassals. As the obligation of military service was inseparable from the possession of fiefs, the clergy were subjected to it like all the other vassals; they took up arms at the summons of their suzerains, and constrained their liegemen to fight for them. From this time a great number of bishops and abbots lived the lives of nobles; arms occupied them as much as the religious services; and they neglected the most sacred duties of religion for the licence of camps. Wherever the clergy did not embrace a martial life, the temporal lord obtained an immense advantage over them, and the bishops and abbots often found it necessary to place themselves under the protection of a noble who was paid to defend them; and who was called *advocate*, or *vidaine*. The clergy, through these feudal organizations, were diverted from the object of their institution, the people more rarely obtained consolation and succour at their hands, and most of the dignitaries of the Church joined the ranks of the oppressors.

An immense majority of the people lived in a servile condition. The class of freemen, as we previously said, had to a great extent disappeared under the Carlovingians; the citizen class had grown weaker, as the importance of the cities became diminished; and we may fairly say that, at the end of the tenth century, there was no middle class between the nobles, the sole possessors of all the enjoyments of life, and the wretches whose humble cabins surrounded their castles, and who were called *serfs*, or men of servitude, attached to the glebe—that is to say, to the land they cultivated. They were bought and sold with the land, and were unable to leave it of their

own accord, to establish themselves elsewhere, when they found themselves too cruelly oppressed. They possessed nothing of their own—neither the huts in which they lived, nor their implements of labour, nor the fruit of their toil, nor their time, nor their children: everything belonged to the lord; and if they were guilty of any fault in his sight, they could not invoke, for their defence, any law or authority, for the right of seignorial justice, of life and death, was absolute.

The condition of the freemen, who did not hold fief, and lived on seignorial domains, seems to have been equally deplorable. Designated as *villains*, or “roturiers,” they hardly enjoyed the right of marrying whom they thought proper, or of disposing of their property as they pleased. They were gradually crushed by intolerable burdens, or subjected to humiliating obligations; they had not the slightest protection, and had incessantly to fear the imposition of some fine or new tax, or the confiscation of their goods. A great number of them took refuge in the towns, where equally great evils followed them. The counts exercised there over them an authority equal to that of the seigneurs on their lands; the tolls and dues of every description were infinitely multiplied; and the towns were eventually subjected, like the country, to an arbitrary impost called *taille*; they were obliged to keep their lord and his people when he came within their walls; provisions, furniture, horses, vehicles—in short, everything they possessed was taken by main force from the inhabitants, at the caprice of the master or his followers, without payment or compensation of any kind. In a word, all social force and influence resided in the possessors of fiefs, who alone had liberty, power, and enjoyment.

Such was the system which, under the name of feudalism, weighed down Europe for centuries. But it rescued her from the anarchy and chaos into which she was plunged, and was the first clumsy attempt at social organization made by society itself since the fall of the Roman Empire. In this vast system, the hierarchy often only existed theoretically; the stronger contrived to make themselves independent, and incalculable evils resulted from this. The territory of Old Gaul was for a long time a blood-stained arena open to the ambition of kings and nobles; but the want of union among the oppressors finally turned to the advantage of the oppressed, who were sustained by the royal authority, when the latter, through its conquest over the aristo-

cracy, prepared new and more happy destinies for France. An important progress toward a better order of things was that which constituted a central force, sufficiently powerful to keep all in check, and to destroy the tyranny of the lords, and which, by creating a middle class between the nobility and the serfs, granted one portion of the people the most precious rights of civil liberty. History shows us the French advancing to this double goal through long convulsions, amid internal discords, and foreign wars. For centuries they approached, but did not reach it; they owed their first progress to the providential concurrence of events as much as to their own efforts, and these combined causes resulted primarily in the rapid growth of the power of the king, the decay of seignorial authority, the restoration of industry, and the enfranchisement of the people of the towns.

## CHAPTER II.

REIGN OF THE FIRST CAPETIAN KINGS—HUGUES CAPET, ROBERT, HENRY I.,  
AND PHILIP I.

987—1108.

## HUGUES CAPET.

ON the accession of the third race, France, properly so called, only comprised the territory between the Somme and the Loire; it was bounded by the counties of Flanders and Vermandois on the north; by Normandy and Brittany on the west; by the Champagne on the east; by the duchy of Aquitaine on the south. The territory within these bounds was the duchy of France, the patrimonial possession of the Capets, and constituted the royal domain. The great fiefs of the crown, in addition to the duchy of France, were the duchy of Normandy, the duchy of Burgundy, nearly the whole of Flanders formed into a county, the county of Champagne, the duchy of Aquitaine, and the county of Toulouse.\* We have already seen that the sovereigns of these various states were the great vassals of the crown, and peers of France, Lorraine, and a portion of Flanders were dependent on the Germanic crown, while Brittany was a fief of the duchy of Normandy.

The efforts made by Hugues to reach the throne, which was the object of all his wishes, seem to have exhausted his strength, and he appears in history less formidable as king than he had been as vassal. He had, in the first instance, to conquer Charles of Lorraine, his competitor; and he triumphed over him by cunning more than by arms. This unhappy prince exclaimed, as he addressed his followers, with

\* The county of Barcelona beyond the Alps was also one of the great fiefs of the crown of France. " |



his face bathed in tears, "My age is advancing, and I find myself, when in years, despoiled of my patrimony. I cannot, without weeping, look upon my young children, the scions of an unfortunate father. O my friends, come to my succour—come to the help of my children!" He had a momentary hope of regaining his hereditary crown; he made himself master of the city of Laon by the treachery of Arnoul, Archbishop of Reims; but it was soon afterwards torn from him by another act of treachery, and he fell into the hands of his rival, who threw him into prison, with his wife and children. Thus the illustrious race of Charlemagne expired in Gaul, as far as history is concerned.\*

Hugues Capet, like his first successors, made a close alliance with the Church, and found it difficult to maintain in obedience the nobles who had raised him to the throne. He contended for a long time against Adalbert, Count of Berigard, one of his most obstinate adversaries.

"Who made you count?" Hugues asked him angrily, while reproaching him with his rebellion.

"And who made you king?" was the haughty answer, which revealed to the King the inconveniences and perils of his situation. Hugues next waged a sanguinary war against his vassal, Eudes, Count de Chartres. He took from him the town of Méhun, and, to complete his subjugation, was compelled to unite his forces with those of the count's worst enemy, Foulques, Count of Anjou.

One of the most important occupations of this King was the convocation of synods or councils. The bishops at that time had the greatest share in the government of the cities. One of them, the celebrated Arnoul of Reims, who, as we have seen, was guilty of treason against the King in surrendering the town of Laon to his rival, was summoned before a council, and deposed. Pope John XV. quashed this sentence, and the clergy signalized their opposition by submitting the papal decision to a new council.

Cruel wars between the great vassals and fearful calamities marked the course of this reign, and confirmed the people in the idea that the end of the world was at hand. A horrible pestilence ravaged Aqu-

\* Six hundred years later, the ambitious princes of the House of Guise claimed the French throne, by appealing to the rights of this same Charles of Lorraine, from whom they declared themselves descended.

taine and a great part of the kingdom, and so great was the suffering of the time, that the expectation of universal destruction inspired many hearts with hope rather than fear. The rich and the great, sharing in the general belief, lavished immense donations on the clergy; many valiant military chiefs exchanged the sword and cuirass for the frock and hair-shirt of the monk; and Hugues Capet himself reigned without wearing the diadem, either because he doubted the validity of his royal title, or because he desired to give his people an example of humility and respect for sacred things. He continued during his whole life to wear the cape as titular abbot of St. Martin of Tours. He placed his crown under the safeguard of the Church, and during his lifetime, caused his son Robert to be crowned, and recommended to him, above all things, to guard the treasure of the abbeys, and submit himself to the Pope.

Hugues Capet died in his bed, after a reign of nine years; he is only illustrious as the founder of a new dynasty, and this great event must be attributed to circumstances, far more than to his genius.

The custom of appanages, or territorial gifts, of more or less extent, granted to the younger sons of the kings, dates from the accession of the third race. These appanages, restricted at the outset, evidently embraced entire provinces, and this custom became, with them, the chief obstacle to the territorial unity of the kingdom.

## ROBERT.

Robert was faithful to the pious instructions of his father. This King seems, through his rare gentleness and his indulgent kindness, to belong to another age. Profoundly moved by the sufferings of his people, he appeared to have undertaken the task of relieving the wretched by unbounded charity; and disarming the rigour of Heaven by angelic patience, and the practice of the most fervent devotion. Many instances of simple and touching goodness are recorded of him. A beggar, whom he was feeding with his own hand, stealthily removed a fringe of gold from the King's robe, and Queen Constance observed the theft. "The man who stole the fringe from me," said the good monarch to his wife, "doubtless needs it more than I." On another occasion, a thief cut off one half of his cloak while he was at prayers: "Leave the rest for another time," said the King, mildly.

This prince, whose pious zeal equalled his charity, composed sacred hymns, sang at the choristers' desk, and directed the choir of St. Denis on holy days.

Among other peculiar traits of his simple superstition, it is recorded that he did not believe an oath obligatory, unless made over the relics of saint or martyr, to which he offered special worship. In order to avoid the sin of a violation of faith, he made those in whose word he had no confidence, swear, without knowing it, at a shrine from which the relics had been removed; and when he himself took an oath upon this empty shrine, he did not scruple to perjure himself. His fervent piety did not protect Robert from ecclesiastical censures; or from the most violent persecutions of the Court of Rome. The laws of the Church at that time composed the entire civil legislation: the Popes constituted themselves sovereign arbiters of cases in which marriage was permitted; and this displayed a praiseworthy courage in contending against the unbridled passions of the kings; and their firmness powerfully contributed towards preserving Christianity from sad disorders, and possibly from polygamy. But, by an abuse of their authority, they carried the prohibition of marriage too far, and proved terrible to those who dared to violate their injunctions, which were frequently arbitrary and unjust. Excommunication, and the placing of a territory under an interdict, were among the means most frequently employed by the Pontiffs to compel the submission of sovereigns. No one might eat, drink, or pray with an excommunicated person, under penalty of being himself excommunicated: when the Pope placed a country under interdict, it was forbidden to celebrate divine service, to administer the sacraments to adults, or to bury the dead in consecrated ground; the sound of bells ceased, the pictures in churches were covered, and the statues of saints were taken down and laid on beds of ashes and thorns. The Court of Rome struck at its enemies with these redoubtable weapons, not dealing less rigorously with sovereigns than with subjects. King Robert experienced this; Hugh, his father, disquieted by the Normans established at Blois, who had refused to recognize him, gained them over by making his son espouse the celebrated Bertha, widow of Eudes I. of Blois. This princess possessed claims on the kingdom of Burgundy, bequeathed by her brother Rodolph to the Empire, and had power to transmit them to the reigning family of

France. The Emperor Otho III. was alarmed at this, and Pope Gregory V., alleging a degree of relationship against the marriage, ordered Robert to leave his wife, and on his refusal, excommunicated him. It is recorded that upon this the King was at once abandoned by all his servants; and it was a popular belief, kept up by the monks, that Queen Bertha was delivered of a monster. Robert, compelled at length to repudiate her, espoused the imperious Constance, daughter of the Count of Toulouse. She reigned in his name, having his authority, and caused the King's favourite, Hugues of Beauvais, to be murdered in his presence.

Robert, in spite of his habitual gentleness, was an accomplice in the cruelties inflicted on the heretics by Constance, twelve of whom were ordered before a council held at Orleans under his presidency, and sentenced to be burnt alive: amongst them was an ex-confessor of the Queen. The King believed that he was doing a pious deed by being present at their punishment; and Constance, who was standing on the road leading to the pyre, put out one of her confessor's eyes with a stick as he passed along. This barbarous fanaticism, one of the characteristic features of the epoch, lasted for six centuries longer in Europe; and the Jews were, during the greater portion of the time, the object of so much execration, that any act of cruelty to them was regarded as a meritorious deed. Nearly everywhere they were outraged and plundered with impunity, the people barbarously taking vengeance for their own sufferings on these hapless beings, and thinking that they honoured God in persecuting them.

Victims of the perpetual discords of the nobles, the people saw their own crops destroyed and cottages burned: there was for them neither rest nor security. Still, the inhabitants of the towns were already beginning to endure with reluctance the vexatious tyranny of their lords, and to regard with some degree of irritation their precarious condition. The cities which had preserved municipal institutions invoked old and unappreciated rights; and in others corporations were formed; the workmen organized a militia, fortified their walls, and guarded the gates. Acts of great injustice caused resentment, which had been too long repressed, to break out, and commotions, which were scarcely recognized, presaged the revolutions which in the following century brought the enfranchisements

of the towns. The inexhaustible charity of Robert only afforded an almost imperceptible relief for the misfortunes of his people, not rich enough to remove their wretchedness, and too weak to put down their oppressors. He died in 1031, lamented by the wretched and regretted by the clergy, leaving his kingdom augmented by the duchy of Burgundy,\* which he had united to it in 1002, on the death of his uncle, Henry the Great. During his reign a wise and learned Frenchman succeeded Gregory V. on the pontifical throne, and renewed the alliance between the holy see and the house of Capet. This was the illustrious Gerbert, who derived from the Moors and the flourishing schools of Cordova all the secrets of the sciences then known: he studied belles-lettres and algebra, learned the art of clock-making, and passed in the eyes of his admiring contemporaries for a magician. First preceptor of the sons of the Emperor Otho, then Archbishop of Rheims and afterwards of Ravenna, he eventually became Pope, under the name of Sylvester II., and exercised the triple authority of the pontificate, of learning, and of genius.

## HENRY I.

HENRY I., the son and successor of Robert, had, at the commencement of his reign, to sustain a family war against his mother, Constance, who raised her young brother Robert to the throne. The Church declared for Henry; and the celebrated Robert the Magnificent, Duke of the Normans, lent him the aid of his sword, and placed the crown more firmly on his head. Henry vanquished his brother, forgave him, and granted him the duchy of Burgundy, the first Capetian house of which was founded by Robert. A famine, during this reign, committed such fearful ravages in Gaul, that at several places men were seen devouring one another. After this plague, troops of wolves devastated the country; and the feudal lords, more terrible than the wild beasts, continued their barbarous wars amid the universal desolation: the clergy scarce able to induce them to suspend their fury by

\* The duchy of Burgundy, which must not be confounded with the transjuran and cisjuran kingdoms of Burgundy, comprised Burgundy proper. From 884 to 1001 this duchy belonged to princes allied to the family of Robert the Strong, among whom was Raoul, King of France. Henry the Great, brother of Hugues Capet, was the last member of this ducal branch; and from 1001 to 1032 his states remained annexed to the kingdom of France.

threatening the judgments of Heaven, and by asserting a multitude of miracles. At length, the councils ordered all to lay down their arms: they published, in 1035, the *Peace of God*, and menaced with excommunication those who violated so holy a law. When in each province a council had established this peace, a deacon announced the fact to the people assembled in the churches; and after reading the Gospel, he went up into the pulpit, and uttered the following malediction against all who infringed the peace: "May they be accursed, they, and those who assist them to do evil! may their arms and their horses be accursed! may they be allotted a place with Cain, the fratricide, the traitor Judas, and Dathan and Abiram, who entered alive into hell! and may their joy be extinguished at the aspect of the holy angels, just as these torches are extinguished before your eyes!" At these words, all the priests, who held lighted torches in their hands, turned them against the ground, and extinguished them; while the people, struck with horror, repeated, in one voice, "May God thus extinguish the joy of those who will not accept peace and justice!"

But passions were too impetuous, ambitions too indomitable, for the evil to be thus totally uprooted. The "*Peace of God*" multiplied the sacrilege without diminishing the number of assassinations. Five years later, another law, known as the *Truce of God*, was substituted for it. The councils that proclaimed this new peace no longer attempted to arrest the working of all human passions; but tried to regulate and subject war to the laws of honour and humanity. An appeal to force was no longer prohibited to those who could invoke no other law; but the employment of this force was subjected to wise and salutary restrictions. From sunset on Wednesday until sunrise on Monday, as well as on festival and fast days, military attack and the effusion of blood were prohibited, and a perpetual safeguard was granted to the churches, and to unarmed clerks and monks: the protection of the truce extended to the peasants, flocks, and instruments of labour. This wise and beneficent law, which was first promulgated in Aquitaine, was adopted throughout nearly the whole of Gaul, where the nobles swore to observe it, and although it was frequently violated, and fell too soon into desuetude, it was a great benefit to the nation, whose manners it softened, and was the noblest work of

the clergy in the middle ages. The rumour was propagated that a horrible disease, called the "sacred fire," was inflicted upon all who broke the "Truce of God." The weak King Henry, through an insensate pride, was almost the only one who in his states refused to recognize the Truce, under the pretext that the clergy encroached upon his authority by attempting to establish it.

This king has left no honourable recollection in history. It is said that, fearing lest he might unconsciously marry a woman related to him by blood, he sought a wife at the extremity of Europe, and that this motive led him to choose as his third wife the Princess Anne, daughter of Jaroslas, Grand Duke of Russia.\* He had three sons by this marriage, the eldest of whom, Philip,† he caused to be crowned during his life. Henry I. carried on an unsuccessful war against his vassal, William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy, and died in 1060, after a reign of twenty-nine years.

#### PHILIP I.

PHILIP, at the age of eight years, succeeded his father under the guardianship of Baldwin V., Count of Flanders. The great event of his reign, and with which he was entirely unconnected, was the conquest of England.

The Norman knights were distinguished from all others by their immoderate desire for martial adventure, and by their brilliant exploits. Some of them, who had landed sixty years previously as pilgrims on the southern coast of Italy, aided the inhabitants of Salerno to repulse a Saracen army of besiegers. Animated by the success of their countrymen, the sons of a simple gentleman, Tancred of Hauteville, followed by a band of adventurers, conquered the province of Apulia from the Greeks, the Lombards, and the Arabs, and sustained successfully an equal struggle against the Emperors of Germany and Byzantium. They took prisoner the German Pope,

\* The Russian nation, which had only been converted to Christianity for a century, was composed of almost savage tribes scattered over an immense territory. Still, its two capitals, Kief and Novogorod, already contained the germs of a highly advanced civilization.

† It has been asserted that this name, which appears for the first time in the history of France, originated in a presumed connection between the Princess Anne and Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great.

Leo IX., who was devoted to the family of the Emperor Henry III., and humbling themselves before their captive, they obtained leave to retain their conquest as a fief of the Church. Robert Guiscard completed the subjugation of Apulia and Calabria, and his brother Roger conquered Sicily: it was thus that the kingdom of the two Sicilies was founded in 1052 by the Normans, and the Pope became its suzerain.

Nothing was talked of in Europe but the valour of the Normans; and when William the Bastard, Duke of Normandy, and son of Robert the Magnificent, collected an army to conquer England, warriors flocked beneath his banners from all sides, full of confidence in his fortune. Great Britain, or England, which had been for several centuries subject to the Saxons, obeyed at this time King Harold, successor of Edward, surnamed the Confessor. A tempest had cast Harold, before he became king, on the coast of Normandy, and he was delivered up to Duke William, in accordance with the custom of the times, shipwrecked men being regarded as abandoned by the judgment of Heaven to the lord of the coast on which the tempest drove them, who could keep them captive, and even put them to torture, in order to obtain a ransom. William, when master of Harold's person, made him swear that he would help him, after the death of Edward, to obtain the kingdom of England; but Harold did not afterwards consider himself bound by an oath which had been extorted by violence. When, therefore, the throne of England became vacant, and Harold, succeeding to it, had been crowned, William reminded Harold of his promise, and appealed to a true or false will of Edward the Confessor in support of his claim, declaring at the same time that he would leave the matter to the decision of the Church. A consistory held at the Lateran pronounced in his favour, and, on the instigation of the monk Hildebrand, adjudged England to him, by sending him, together with a consecrated standard, the diploma of sovereign of that country. A great battle, fought in 1066 near Hastings, between the rivals to the English crown, decided the war. Harold lost his life in it, and England, after an obstinate contest, became a conquest of the Normans. William distributed all the estates as fiefs to his knights; and from this time feudalism spread over this country the net-work with which it already covered France, Germany, and Italy. A few years after-



wards a prince of the house of France, Henry of Burgundy, founded the kingdom of Portugal, after a long series of victories gained over the infidels. These great events inflamed minds, and disposed the nations for adventurous expeditions in remote countries: they were the precursors of the crusades, or wars undertaken for the deliverance of the Holy Land.

A revolution, of which the celebrated Hildebrand was the principal author, was at this time accomplished in the Church. The tenth century more especially had been for her a period of desolation; the see of St. Peter had become the prey of intrigue and violence: and these disorders were not the only evils that afflicted the Church. From the time the clergy, in order to defend their domains, had hastened to enter the feudal hierarchy, they had been bound down by the authority of the princes and their great vassals. Nearly all the bishops of France held fiefs of the crown, and in the course of the eleventh century there was an odious traffic in ecclesiastical lands and dignities, which were not given, as formerly, to the most worthy, but to the highest bidder. The Pope himself, who at that epoch was chosen by the clergy and the people, was constrained to demand of the Emperor of Germany, as successor of Charlemagne, the confirmation of his election, and the Emperor Henry III., taking advantage of the intestine divisions among the Romans, claimed the sole right of nominating and appointing the successors of St. Peter. Such was the situation of the Church towards the middle of the eleventh century. Nicholas II., who had just ascended the pontifical seat, had as counsellor a monk who felt indignant at the vices of the ecclesiastics, the degradation of the Church, and the encroachments of the temporal power on the spiritual authority. This monk, this man so celebrated in religious history, was Hildebrand. He resolved to deprive the feudal lords of every species of influence over the clergy, to strengthen the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and to raise the Pope above the kings of the earth, hoping thus to enable the Church to recover her efficiency, her splendour, and all her power. Such a prospect of universal supremacy was, in the age of Hildebrand, a conception of genius. This great man had consulted the spirit of his age. The rights of humanity were nowhere respected; the nations, oppressed by a thousand tyrants, had no other representatives, and no other natural defenders,

than the clergy. Most of the members of this order come from the lower classes; and ecclesiastical dignities, and even the tiara itself, were often bestowed on men of the most obscure birth; so that the voice of the Church combating the temporal power might, to some extent, be regarded as the energetic protest of the people against their oppressors. There was merit and grandeur, under the feudal despotism, in determining to regenerate the world on a Christian basis, by giving it as guide the man who was universally recognized as the visible chief of Christianity. Hildebrand's honour consists in having re-animated religious enthusiasm by attempting to enfranchise the spiritual authority of the Church from all temporal servitude; his error consisted in having listened too much to his own ambition, in attempting to render the political government of the princes subservient to the ecclesiastical authority.

Many priests and bishops contracted, by marriage, ties which rendered them dependent on the princes. Nicholas broke those ties: he forbade the marriage of priests, and severely punished monks living in a state of concubinage.

Hildebrand was chosen in 1073, by the people and clergy of Rome, as the successor of Pope Alexander III. At first, he deferentially asked his confirmation of the Emperor Henry IV., and when he had obtained it, he displayed under the name of Gregory VII. his vast and haughty genius and his inflexible character. He withdrew the nomination of the Popes from the influence of the Emperors by establishing the College of Cardinals, specially entrusted with the election of the Pontiff; he renewed the bull condemning the marriage of priests; he prohibited emperors, kings, and the great vassals from giving ecclesiastical investitures to bishops; and, finally, he published the famous decretals known by the name of *Dictatus Papæ*, in which he placed among the papal privileges those of deposing emperors, of making monarchs kiss his feet, of judging without appeal, and of being made holy by the mere fact of ordination.

Philip I., King of France, and Henry IV., Emperor of Germany, were both leading at this time a life full of scandal and violence; and in order to supply their unbounded extravagance, they carried on, in defiance of Gregory's prohibition, the most disgraceful traffic in Church endowments. The indignant Pontiff threatened Philip with

excommunication, and laid it upon the Emperor. An obstinate war began between them, which is known in history by the name of "The War of Investitures," because the Pope maintained by it his prohibition of princes investing bishops, and reserved that right solely for himself. In this celebrated war the principal allies of the Pontiff were the Normans of Apulia and Sicily, and the Countess Matilda, sovereign of Tuscany. Gregory VII. liberated the subjects of Henry from the oath of allegiance; and the Emperor, abandoned by them, found himself reduced to implore pardon of his haughty victor: he presented himself as a suppliant in the month of January, 1077, at the Castle of Canossa, the residence of the Pope, who insulted his misfortune, and, before granting absolution to him, compelled the Emperor to remain for three days and nights in a court of the palace, exposed to the severe cold, with his bare feet in the snow. At length he deigned to absolve him. But so many outrages had revolted the crowned heads and moved the partisans of the Emperor with indignation. Henry IV. avenged himself, and Gregory VII. died in exile. The colossal edifice raised by this Pontiff did not perish with him; his successors consolidated it amid terrible upheavals in the Empire and the Church: he had founded the universal monarchy of the Popes on a durable basis, on the ruling spirit of his age, and this supremacy attained one hundred years afterwards its culminating point. The Crusades contributed greatly to its consolidation; Gregory conceived the idea, but it was not given to him to see its accomplishment: the first of those memorable events had its origin in the time of Philip I., and under the Pontificate of Urban II.

Palestine, or the Holy Land, held for many ages by the Mussulmans, had been one of the first victories of the disciples of Mahomet, and henceforward the subjugation of that country had been a theme of indignation and sorrow to Christendom. It was believed that an especial sanctity was attached to the places where Christ had suffered death for mankind, and where his tomb was yet to be seen. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem was regarded as the most effectual means for the expiation of sins; and great numbers of pilgrims journeyed, alone or in bands, to Palestine, to pray at the tomb of the Saviour. Already adventurous knights, after seeking through Europe new fields for their valour, had carried defiance to the Mussulman; but most of these had

been slain, only a few returned to Europe, where the recital of their perils, and of their glorious deeds of arms, filled every soul with an ardent and pious emulation.

Such was the public disposition of feeling, when an enthusiast, known as Peter the Hermit, quitted the town of Amiens, his native place, to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The sight of the holy places excited to the highest degree his pious fervour : he returned to Europe and repaired to Italy. There he exhorted Pope Urban II. to place himself at the head of the nations of Europe, conjoined for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre, and the rescue of the bones of the Saints from the hands of the Mussulmans.

He won over the Pontiff to his views, and received from him letters to all the Christian princes, with the mission of stimulating them to this holy enterprise. Peter travelled throughout Europe ; he inflamed the imagination of the nobles and the people, he preached to them salvation, and promised them Paradise if they would go to Palestine. Two years later, in 1095, a council, convoked by Urban, assembled at Clermont, in Auvergne. A prodigious number of princes and nobles of all ranks flocked thither, and three hundred and ten bishops supported the solemnity under the presidency of the Pope himself. After having decided clerical affairs, Urban drew a pathetic picture of the desolation of the holy shrines, he lamented bitterly the afflictions suffered by the Christians of Palestine, and the listening throng burst into sobs and tears.

The Pontiff next recounted the audacity and insolence of the enemies of Christ, and, indignant at such outrages, exclaimed in the tone of inspiration : "Enrol yourselves under the banners of God ; advance, sword in hand, like true children of Israel, into the Land of Promise, charge boldly, and doubt not that, opening a path through the armies of the infidels and the numbers of their host, the Cross will ever be victorious for the Crusader. Make yourselves masters of those fertile lands which infidels have usurped ; drive out thence heresy and impiety ; in short, make their land to produce palms only for you, and out of their spoils raise magnificent trophies to Glory, Religion, and the French nation."

At these words the transport was general, his hearers quivered with indignation, and impatiently desired to arm at once — at once to

depart:—"Let us go," said the whole assembly: "it is the will of God! it is the will of God!"

"Go then," replied the Pontiff: "go, brave champions of Jesus Christ, avenge His wrong; and, since all together have cried, 'It is the will of God!' let those words be the battle-cry of your holy enterprise."

The distinctive sign, common to all these warriors, was a cross of red cloth worn on the right shoulder, and from this was derived the word "*Crusade*." The princes and nobles received such crosses from the hands of the Pope; the people came in a crowd, and the cardinals and bishops distributed them with their benedictions: to take the Cross was to vow to make the sacred journey.

The Crusaders separated to prepare for departure and to communicate to all their pious ardour. The general meeting of the ardent host was fixed for the spring of the following year. The enthusiasm extended to every class, each one desired to merit salvation by devoting himself to a desperate undertaking, by essaying an adventurous life in unknown lands. An immense number of serfs, peasants, homeless wanderers, and even women and children, assembled together, and their impatience could brook neither obstacles nor delays; they divided into two bands, led, the one by Peter the Hermit, the other by a knight named "Walter the Moneyless." Their fanatic zeal displayed itself on the way by a general massacre of the Jews. They devastated for their support the countries which they passed through, raising up in arms against themselves the outraged populations; and almost all perished of famine, fatigue, and misery before reaching the Holy Land.

Notwithstanding, the flower of European chivalry took up arms for the Cross, the nobles pawned their property to defray the expenses of the enterprise; they divided themselves into three formidable armies: the first was commanded by Robert Curt-Hose, son of William the Conqueror, the second by Godfrey de Bouillon, the hero of his age, the third and last marched under the banner of the Count of Toulouse, Raymond de Saint-Gilles. Godfrey was proclaimed commander-in-chief; ten thousand knights followed him with seventy thousand men on foot from France, Lorraine, and Germany; the general muster was at Constantinople, where reigned Alexius Comnenus. This Emperor received them with discourtesy, and hastened

to give them vessels to cross the Bosphorus, after having cunningly obtained from them the oath of homage for their future conquests. The Crusaders first possessed themselves of Nicea, then of Antioch, through sanguinary struggles, and at length achieved the conquest of Jerusalem.

In 1099, a Christian kingdom was founded in Palestine : Godfrey de Bouillon was its recognized king, but contented himself with the title of "Baron of the Holy Sepulchre." Feudalism was organized in the East ; three great fiefs of the crown of Jerusalem were created : there were the principalities of Antioch and Edessa, and the Earldom of Tripoli ; they had a Marquis of Jaffa, a Prince of Galilee, a Baron of Sidon, and the name of "*Franks*" became in Asia an appellation common to all Eastern Christians. Such were the principal facts of that first and celebrated Crusade. There only returned to Europe one-tenth of the number who quitted it.

Philip I. did not associate himself with that expedition. He took no part in the great enterprises which signalized the age in which he lived, and his reign offers nothing worthy of record. In 1072, the widow of his tutor, Baldwin, Count of Flanders, having been deposed by her son Robert le Trison, had recourse to Philip ; the king took up arms for her, marched against Robert, and suffered an ignominious defeat before Cassel. He also carried on a war for twelve years against William the Conqueror, which was not marked by any memorable event. William gained over the councillors and partisans of Philip by offering them the bribe of large estates in England. Philip, on his side, promised protection to all the Norman malcontents, and espoused the cause of Robert, eldest son of William, in rebellion against his father. After a truce, and during an illness of the duke, he derided him on account of his excessive stoutness, asking when he expected his *accouchement*. William heard of it, and furious, swore that at his "churching" he would send him ten thousand lances in place of tapers. He assembled a formidable army, and carried fire and sword through Philip's dominions, but at the sack of Mantes his horse stumbled, and the rider was wounded in the fall. They carried William in a dying condition to Rouen, where he expired in 1087. He was scarcely dead when the nobles who surrounded him left hastily for their castles ; his servants pillaged his valuables, carried off even the

funeral bed, and left the naked body of the Conqueror on the floor. A poor knight found it in that condition, and touched by compassion undertook the care of the funeral rites for the love of God and the honour of his nation. The body was put into a coffin at his expense and transported to Caen, where it was to be buried in a church founded by William himself. At the moment when the funeral oration was being pronounced, and the body about to be lowered into the grave, a Norman named Asseline advanced, and said :—" This ground belongs to me ; that man whose eulogy you are pronouncing robbed me of it. Here, even here, stood my paternal mansion ; this man seized it against all justice, and without paying the price of it. In the name of God, I forbid you to cover the body of the plunderer with earth that belongs to me."

Notable example of the vanity of an existence which offers the most singular mixture of grandeur and iniquity, of violent barbarities and useful and fruitful creations ! This William, the conqueror of a great kingdom, who had grasped immense domains in a strange country, only obtained through pity a grave upon his native soil ; those who assisted at his burial were obliged to put down the price of it on his coffin. None of his three sons paid him the last duties, but they made furious war over his heritage ; William Rufus succeeded him in England, and ended by seizing upon Normandy, while Robert was fighting in Palestine.

The death of the redoubtable William was a great source of joy to Philip, and allowed him to continue his indolent and scandalous career. He had married Bertha, the daughter of Count Florent of Holland ; he left and imprisoned her ; afterwards he carried off Bertrade, the wife of Foulque le Rechin, Count of Anjou, and married her. Pope Urban ordered the dissolution of this marriage, and on the refusal of Philip, a council, assembled at Autun in 1094, sentenced him to excommunication. Philip was not permitted to carry longer the outward marks of royalty : he was afflicted with grievous infirmities, in which he recognized the hand of God ; at length, in the year 1100, he associated his son Louis with himself in the kingdom, and reigned only in name. A dreadful fear of hell seized him ; he renounced through humility the regal privilege of being interred in the tomb of the kings at St. Denis, and died in 1108 in the habit of a Benedictine friar.

The extent of the royal possessions, properly speaking, varied little under the first Capets: its limits were those of the ancient duchy of France. The authority of the King was not exercised freely and directly, except in his quality of Duke of France, and only in some of the cities of that duchy; and between these even the communications were difficult. The great fiefs of the crown to the number of seven were the same as under Hugh Capet, the duchy of France, to the possession of which the royal title was attached, the duchies of Normandy, of Burgundy, and of Guienne or Aquitaine, and the baronies of Flanders, Champagne, and Toulouse; to these great states must be added, beyond the Pyrenees, the barony of Barcelona.\* The seven great fiefs held each in their tenure inferior fiefs, of whom many were themselves very considerable.

The duchy of France had for its principal fiefs the baronies of Paris and Orléans, the barony of Maine, and that of Anjou.

From the duchy of Normandy arose the barony of Brittany, those of Alençon, Aumale, Evreux, Mortain, and many other great seigniories.

The duchy of Burgundy held in its tenure the baronies of Bar, Nevers, Charolais, &c.

Upon the vast duchy of Guienne or Aquitaine were dependent the duchy of Gascoigne, the baronies of Berry, Poitiers, Marche, Angoulême, and Périgord, &c.

The barony of Flanders comprised Ponthieu, Artois, Hainault, &c.

The barony of Champagne, which in 1019 annexed the vast possessions of the counts of Vermandois, comprised under its tenure the baronies of Meaux, Troyes, Blois, Chartres, Valois, Rhethel, &c.

The barony of Toulouse comprised within itself the baronies of Quercy and Romagne, the marquisate of Provence, detached from the ancient kingdom of Arles, and which received also the name of the barony of Venaissin. The Seven Great Fiefs became the viscounty of Narbonne, &c.

All the fiefs of the lower order had themselves in their tenure many

\* Brittany and Anjou have often been declared as being fiefs to the crown under the early Capetian kings. This is an error. Brittany was directly allied to the duchy of Normandy, and Anjou to the duchy of France. Philip I. received direct homage from the Count of Anjou, not as King, but as Duke of France.



"*arrière fiefs*," which mostly consisted of "*vicomtés des villes*," "*baronnies*," "*chatellenies*," each one containing parishes or villages; below these fiefs we find those of simple possessors of *châteaux*.

The clergy possessed of itself a great number of very important fiefs. The archbishops and bishops were lords of the city, or part of the city where their seat was situated, and suzerains of many considerable baronies and seigniories. Many abbots at length were lords of the cities where their monastery raised its head, and possessed also other seigniories. The abbots of St. Germain, of St. Geneviève, and of St. Victor, were each one suzerain of a "*quarter*" of Paris. The abbot of Fécaïp possessed ten baronies, that of St. Martin de Tours had twenty thousand serfs on his domains. And one may gain an idea of the immensity of the ecclesiastical possessions in the twelfth century, when we know that at that time France counted about 2,000 monasteries on her soil.

## CHAPTER III.

REIGNS OF LOUIS VI. AND LOUIS VII.

1108-1179.

LOUIS VI.

THE reign of Philip I. and of his immediate predecessors had been nothing but one long anarchy ; yet France had not remained stationary, she had made great progress at the end of the eleventh century. Her cities were more numerous, more populous, more industrious. Her citizen class began to enfranchise itself, and defended its liberties by force of arms. The language and poetry of France arose ; at length, the clergy encouraged with all their power the progress of literary and scientific instruction ; they crowned with rewards and raised to the highest dignity those who distinguished themselves by their learning ; but the studies of this age consisted solely of subtle discussions on logic and theology.

The earlier of the Capetian kings had remained ignorant of, and almost indifferent to, the progress of France under their rule, and had outwardly exercised no personal influence. Louis VI., nicknamed at first L'Eveillé, afterwards Le Gros and Le Batailleur, understood best the spirit of his times. He was the first knight in his kingdom, and it was with casque on head and lance in rest that he sought and won the esteem of every one. His personal estates, almost confined to the cities of Paris, Orléans, Etamps, Méhun, Compeigne and their territories, were bordered on the north by those of Robert le Jérusalemite, Count of Flanders, and on the east by the estates of Hugues I., Count of Champagne. The dominions of Thibaut, Count of Meaux, Chartres and Blois, and those of Foulque V., Count of Anjou and Touraine, closed in on the south this feeble kingdom of France, which the vast possessions of Henry I., son of William the Conqueror, King of England and Duke of Normandy, confined on the west. During the

whole of his life Louis had to contend with these powerful enemies, of whom the most formidable was Henry I. After a preliminary struggle, unfruitful in any important result, as to the possession of the Castle of Gisors, he embraced against Henry the cause of his nephew William Clinton, the son of Robert Curt-Hose, and dispossessed, as was his father, of the duchy of Normandy. Louis VI. was vanquished at the battle of Brenneville, fought in 1119. He made an appeal also to the militia of the cities and of the Church, and found them disposed to second him; the prelates ordered the inferior clergy to summon their parishioners to arms, and these, led by their pastors, ranged themselves under the royal standard, and entered with Louis VI. into Normandy, where they committed great ravages. A council was assembled at Rheims, under the presidency of Pope Calixtus II., with the intention of putting an end to this ruinous war. Louis presented himself there and recited his grievances. The conditions of peace were decided by the council. Henry was to remain in possession of Normandy, for which his son should render homage to the King of France.

Besides this important war, Louis le Gros sustained an almost incessant contest against his own barons, and amongst others against Thomas de Marles, son of Enguerrand de Coucy. They infested like brigands the roads around Paris and Orléans, pillaging villages and destroying the traders. The King, by force of arms, reduced a great number of them to obedience, or at least rendered them powerless for evil, thus securing public safety in his dominions. But such was the weakness at this period of a King of France, that Philip I. had all his life vainly endeavoured to seize on the castle of the sire de Monthery, six leagues from the capital. This baron was stained with the crime of brigandage, and very redoubtable. Louis le Gros overcame him in his stronghold, and reunited it by this change of owners to the seigniorship of his territories.

The King associated his elder son Philip with himself in the government. This young prince, who gave bright promise, was killed accidentally, and the King substituted for him his second son Louis, surnamed the Young. He continued without success his war against Henry I., who died in 1135. A sanguinary struggle ensued for the succession to that prince's crown between Stephen of Boulogne, his

*Struggle of Louis VI. against Henry I., King of England.*

*War against his vassals.*

nephew, and his daughter Margaret, widow of the Emperor Henri V., and married a second time to Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou, the founder of the celebrated house of Plantagenet which reigned so long in England. William X., the powerful Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitou, supported the pretensions of Geoffrey, and with him carried fire and sword through Normandy, but returned covered with the maledictions of the people. William, overcome by remorse, under-

Marriage of  
Louis the Young  
with Eleanor of  
Aquitaine.

took a pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella, in Spain, and offered his daughter Eleanor to Louis, son of the King of France. This alliance promised to double

the estates of the King, who hastened to conclude it; he sent his son into Aquitaine with a brilliant cortège, and the marriage was cele-

brated between the solemnisation of two funerals;—that of William X., who sank on his pilgrimage, and that of Louis le Gros, who died the same year, in 1137.

Death of  
Louis VI. 1137.

We observe in this reign, and more especially after the battle of Brenneville, that the alliance of the King with the Church and with the commons of the kingdom becomes apparent. The support of the King was necessary to the Church and the rising bourgeoisie, to enable them to resist the oppression of the feudal nobility. It was to this community of interests that the kings of France owed in a great measure, firstly, the preservation of their crown, and subsequently their influence and their conquests. The sanction, accorded by Louis VI. to the enfranchisements of many communes, illustrated the spirit of his reign.\* Nevertheless he did nothing but legitimize revolutions already accomplished, almost always sanctioning, under condition of a pecuniary compensation, arrangements or treaties concluded between the nobles and bourgeoisie; sometimes even, as we may see in the quarrel between the commune of Laon with its bishop, after having sold to the bourgeoisie for a heavy sum certain privileges, he would receive money from their seigneurs for permitting the latter to revoke them. On this occasion the inhabitants of the village revolted, murdered their lord, their bishop, and sought the support of the renowned Thomas de Marles, who defended them for some time against the King, and finished by falling with them. Louis VI. in his conduct towards the bourgeoisie of the cities was in no way actuated by zeal for the public liberty, he cared

\* For an account of the condition of the commons in the twelfth century, see Chap. VI.

\*only for the needs of his treasury, which was recruited in this manner, and for the interests of his power, which continued to increase up to the time of his death, especially in the centre of France, where the royal authority had before him been almost disregarded, and where he caused it to be respected. He did not care to accord, within his own dominions, those privileges which he ratified on the territories of others, and we can recognize in him neither the founder of the liberties of the people, nor an enemy to the privileges of the nobility. An illustrious man, the Abbé Suger, acquired at this period a reputation as a statesman, a great politician, and a <sup>Suger, Abbé of St. Denis.</sup> profound scholar; he obtained by his individual merit the celebrated abbacy of St. Denis, the sanctuary of the first patron-saint of the kingdom,\* and was in the following reign charged with the regency of the State.

## LOUIS VII.

LOUIS VII., surnamed the Young, exhibited on ascending the throne a spirit as warlike as his father. He supported Geoffrey Plantagenet against his rival Stephen, and aided him <sup>Accession of Louis VII. surnamed the Young, 1137.</sup> to conquer Normandy, for which Geoffrey did homage. England remained to Stephen, who recognized the son of Geoffrey and Matilda as heir to his crown. Louis kept the barons and the clergy in order: he opposed the usurpations of Pope Innocent II., and refused to recognize the Archbishop of Bourges, elected by that Pontiff, who soon laid an interdict on every place where the King stayed. Louis the Young was the fourth Capetian King thus struck at by the Holy See. No family had shown more deference towards the Court of Rome, none had been treated by her with more rigour.

The most memorable event of this reign is the second Crusade, preached with immense success by Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, and commanded by the King in person. Louis believed that he had a great crime to expiate: in a war with Thibaut, Count of Champagne, his sol-

\* "Montjoie et Saint Denis!" was for a lengthened period the war-cry of the French; the banner under which the vassals of the abbey fought became the national standard. Louis the Fat and his successor took it from the altar on which it reposed when setting forth upon an expedition, and returned it thence in pomp at the conclusion of the war. It bore the name of "oriflamme," because the staff was covered with gold, whilst the edge of the flag was cut into the form of flames.

diers had set fire to the church of Vitry, and thirteen hundred persons perished in the flames. Terrified at this frightful disaster, he asked for absolution from the Pope, and only succeeded in obtaining it from Celestin II., successor to Innocent. It effected but little towards calming his conscience. Edessa in Palestine had succumbed to the arms of the Sultan Zinghi. Nothing was heard of throughout Christendom but the fall of this famous city and the massacre of its inhabitants; exclamations of fury and of vengeance arose on all sides. France was the first to be convulsed by the voice

of Saint Bernard, and communicated the movement to Europe. Louis VII. took up the Cross, and asked permission to depart from Suger, Abbot of Saint Denis, from whom, by a singular effect of the feudal system, he held Vexin in fief, and received from his hands the oriflamme; he confided to him the regency of the kingdom and went forth on his journey at the head of a hundred thousand French. But here ended his reputation as king and knight. Conrad, Emperor of Germany, who had preceded him with a formidable army, was treacherously led by Greek guides to Asia Minor; his troops being surprised and annihilated amongst the defiles of Lycaonia. Louis VII. gathered together the remnants of the host, but himself lost the half of his own forces on the mountain of Laodicca. He fruitlessly undertook many enterprises, each of which was marked by a disaster; in fine, the whole of the expedition of Louis VII. was reduced, as far as he was concerned, to a pious pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. He returned to Europe with the Crusader princes, and brought back with him only a few soldiers. His entire host had been annihilated.

Louis found his kingdom at peace, indeed almost flourishing, thanks to the wise administration of the great and modest Suger. But the deplorable result of that Crusade, for which he had laid a heavy tax on his people, had destroyed all the King's popularity, even his character seemed weakened by it, and from that time history sees in him less of the king than of the monk. Under pretext of too near blood relationship

he divorced his Queen, Eleanor, who, thus abandoned, gave her hand to Henry Plantagenet, heir to the crown of England, and carried to him her dowry of Aquitaine, taken away from France by this fatal divorce. Louis saw with

Massacre of  
Vitry.

Second Crusade,  
1147.

Divorce of Louis  
VII. and Eleanor  
of Aquitaine,  
1152.

emotion the half of his territories about to pass to his rival, and sought in vain to throw obstacles in the way of the marriage. The new husband of Elcanor succeeded Stephen on the throne of England, and became the celebrated Henry II. He conquered Ireland, menaced Scotland, and showed himself on the Continent the most redoubtable and powerful of sovereigns. He possessed in France Anjou, Maine, Touraine, Aquitaine, and Normandy. He professed great friendship toward Louis the Young, and united in marriage his son, seven years of age, to the daughter of Louis, still in her cradle. War broke out on the subject of the dowry of this princess, and suddenly Louis obtained a powerful auxiliary in the clergy of England, excited against Henry II. by the famous Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. This prelate, at first a courtier, afterwards chancellor of the King of England, and intended by him to occupy, as his creature, the first episcopal seat of his kingdom, scarcely found himself therein, when he surrendered the pleasures of the court for the austere duties which he regarded as inseparable from his new position. He took in hand and maintained to his death the defence of the cause which Gregory VII. had defended to the last extremity—that of the spiritual authority as opposed to the regal; and while Pope Alexander III. barely held his own against the anti-Pope Victor, and against the powerful Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, à Becket constituted himself in the West the most intrepid champion of the Church, of which Henry II., by the edict of Clarendon, violated the privileges in suppressing ecclesiastical tribunals and the benefit of clergy. These privileges gave rise, no doubt, to numerous abuses and insured immunity to many culprits, but such were the barbarous ignorance and odious corruption of the lay tribunals in the twelfth century, that ecclesiastical jurisdiction alone inspired some confidence in the people, and the least heavy yoke was that of the Church.

Struggle between  
Henry and  
Thomas à Becket.

À Becket, pursued by the resentment of Henry II., took refuge in France, where Louis received him with great favour, and the war continued between the two kings until the peace of Montmirail. Thomas à Becket returned to England, and Henry exclaimed one day in a transport of fury: "Will none of the cowards whom I support rid me of this priest?" These words were heard; four knights, devoted to

the King, assassinated Thomas à Becket at the foot of the altar.

Death of Thomas  
à Becket, 1172.

There was an universal cry of malediction throughout the Church against the homicidal monarch, and the martyred and canonized prelate became more baleful to Henry II. after his death than he had ever been during his life. Every one turned with horror from the King, who, to appease the public clamour, submitted to a humiliating penance. Then was seen the most renowned prince in Christendom exhibiting tokens of the humblest contrition, remaining fasting and with bare feet during forty-eight hours in the cathedral, the scene of the murder, and submitting to be beaten with rods by the clergy, the monks, and choristers of that church.

Henceforth Henry II. enjoyed no more quiet; his wife Eleanor, irritated by his infidelities, incited his three sons to revolt against him, and in accordance with the disgraceful custom of the times, Louis VII. supported them in the unholy war. They rendered him homage for Normandy, Aquitaine, and Brittany, but they were defeated by their father; the two kings were then reconciled. Louis placed the crown on the head of his son Philip Augustus, and made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Thomas à Becket; he died immediately afterwards,

Death of Louis  
VII., 1179.

leaving the reputation of being a devout monarch, full of reverence for the secular orders, and of benevolence towards his subjects; but in spite of all his grandeur and his able policy he lived too long for his own glory and for the prosperity of France, which lost in the latter part of his reign those provinces which she had acquired in the beginning of it by his marriage, and which she never finally recovered till after ages of warfare and disaster.

During the lifetime of this King, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa commenced against the cities of Lombardy a sanguinary war, which for a long time involved Italy in bloodshed, and weakened the imperial power while increasing the influence of the Sovereign Pontiffs. This

War of the  
Guelphs and the  
Ghibellines.

famous war is known in history under the name of the wars of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines; the former were supported by the Emperor, the latter were the partisans of the Pope, and fought for the independence of the cities of Lombardy. The Popes contended at this juncture for the liberty of the people against the despotism of the kings and of the feudal aristocracy.



## CHAPTER IV.

REIGN OF PHILIP II., SURNAMED AUGUSTUS, AND OF LOUIS VIII.

1179-1226.

PHILIP II.

WHEN Philip II, surnamed Augustus,\* ascended the throne, the territory which composes France of the present day was almost entirely under the sway of various powerful princes. The greater part of the provinces, at first independent, had recognized the sovereignty of some monarch; those of the west were subject, in a great measure, to the King of England, those of the east to the Emperor of Germany, and those of the north to the King of France; lastly, Provence and a part of Languedoc pertained to the sceptre of Arragon. Philip saw all the crowns rival to his eclipsed before him, and the glory is his of having been the first of his race who made his influence felt from the Scheldt to the Mediterranean, from the Rhine to the Ocean. Great events mark the course of his reign: there were the third and fourth Crusades; the sudden acquisition of monarchical power by the seizure of the continental provinces of the King of England; and lastly, the destruction of the Albigenses, or heretics, of Languedoc and Provence.

Before the age of fifteen years this prince signalized his accession to the throne by a frightful persecution of the Jews, whom he despoiled and drove from the kingdom. He showed <sup>Religious persecutions.</sup> himself yet more cruel with regard to a sect of heretics named "Patarins," and condemned them to the flames. These blasphemers found in him a pitiless judge: the rich were compelled to pay twenty "golden sous," the poor being thrown into the river. A series of contests and negotiations with the great vassals of the crown occupied the early years of this reign. Philip espoused the daughter of the Count of

\* Because he was born in the month of August.

Flanders, and obtained by this marriage the city of Amiens, and the barrier of the Somme, so important to the defence of his states. He increased his power by unfair means, fomenting civil wars among his neighbours, and exciting, up to the death of Henry II., the children of that king against their father. The latter signed a humiliating treaty with his son Richard and Philip Augustus. He heard of the revolt of John, his third son, and died of grief at Chinon. Richard succeeded him on the throne of England, and won by his fiery and impetuous valour the surname of Cœur de Lion.

The enthusiasm of the Crusades was rekindled in Europe by the recital of the misfortunes which overwhelmed the kingdom of Jerusalem,\* where Lusignan bore rule. Saladin, surnamed the Great, prince or sultan of the Mussulmans in Egypt and in Syria, had inflicted numerous reverses on the Christians of Palestine: these, succumbing to the baneful influence of the climate and manners of the East, had promptly degenerated, and most of their chiefs had hastened their misfortunes by conceiving themselves absolved from the obligation of keeping their oaths with the infidels. Saladin gained over them the celebrated battle of Tiberias: Jerusalem and her King fell before the power of the conqueror.

This terrible news struck Christendom with consternation, and filled it with mourning; a formidable expedition was prepared: the three greatest sovereigns of Europe, Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, Richard, King of England, and Philip, King of France, took up the Cross, and each led into Palestine a numerous army. The results by no means corresponded to these grand efforts; Frederick, before arriving, was drowned crossing the river Selef, near Seleucia. Philip and Richard quarrelled over the siege of St. Jean d'Acre. Philip was jealous of the prodigious exploits of his rival, whilst Richard, indignant and irritated at the superiority which Philip affected towards him as lord suzerain, supported with impatience the feudal yoke. The King of

Fall of the kingdom of Jerusalem.

Third Crusade, 1138.

\* This kingdom, founded by the Crusaders in 1099, had at first been circumscribed by the limits of the ancient kingdoms of Judah and of Israel; subsequently it spread itself over almost the whole of Syria. Godfrey of Bouillon was the first King of Jerusalem; Baldwin I., Baldwin II., Foulques, Baldwin III., Amaury, Baldwin IV., Baldwin V., Guy of Lusignan, were his successors. Thenceforward the title of King of Jerusalem became purely nominal.

France returned to his kingdom, leaving his army under the command of Richard. He swore, on leaving him, not to undertake anything against him in his absence, and to defend his territories as he would his own. Richard pursued his heroic career in Palestine; he gained brilliant but fruitless victories, wearing out the Crusaders, who murmured, wishing to return to their own country, till at length they compelled him to quit the Holy Land. Saladin offered to the Christians peaceable possession of the plains of Judea, and liberty to perform the pilgrimage to Jerusalem: Richard agreed to these conditions, and embarked for Europe; he landed in Austria, upon the territories of the Duke Leopold, his mortal enemy, who delivered him up to the Emperor Henry VI., whose hatred Richard had excited: Henry imprisoned him in the Castle of Dierstein, and sent to inform the King of France of it.

Captivity of  
Richard Cœur de  
Lion.

Philip had returned to his kingdom full of animosity towards the King of England. He had sworn not to attack his dominions in his absence; nevertheless, he had already applied to the Pope to be absolved from his oath, when he heard of the captivity of his rival. The Pope refused to release him from his word; but Philip, taking no heed of his refusal, commenced the war. Richard was then betrayed by his brother John, who had possessed himself of a portion of his territories, and who, as well as Philip, offered the Emperor enormous sums of money to keep the English monarch captive; but the imprisonment of that prince, the hero of the Crusade, outraged all Europe, and the public clamour compelled Henry VI. to give him his liberty, which he sold to him for a heavy ransom. He required of him, in a public diet of the empire, homage as his suzerain, and released him after ruining him by an exorbitant ransom. Richard returned unexpectedly to his dominions; he reduced his brother to submission, and avenged himself on Philip by forming an alliance with the most powerful of the barons inimical to the French monarch. The war was prolonged between these two rivals with divers success; they signed a truce for five years, and Richard was killed at the siege of the small fortress of Chalus-Chabrol in Limousin (1199).

Death of Richard  
and usurpation of  
John, surnamed  
Lackland, 1199.

John, the youngest son of Henry II., seized the crown of England, and Philip supported against him the just pretensions

of Arthur of Brittany, his nephew, the son of his elder brother; this young prince promised homage to Philip for all his possessions in France, and ceded Normandy to him. A sanguinary war arose.

Death of Arthur  
of Brittany.

Arthur with his knights was captured by King John, and met his death by assassination. It is said that his uncle came by night to the tower of Rouen where he held him captive, and that after vainly striving to make him cede to him his rights, he stabbed him with his sword, fastened a heavy stone to the body, and himself threw it into the water. This frightful crime excited universal indignation, and it was to the interest of France that he should meet chastisement. It was in fact a measure which served the interests of the crown no less by its immediate results, than by the idea which it gave of the power of the French monarch and of the dependence thereupon of his great vassals. John, King of England,

Citation of King  
John before the  
Court of Peers.

and vassal of the crown for his continental possessions, was cited by Philip, his suzerain, before his peers to answer, among other heads of the accusation, for the murder of his nephew Arthur. He did not repudiate the jurisdiction of the tribunal, but dreading its sentence, he did not appear before it:

Condemnation of  
King John.

Reunion of his  
continental  
possessions with  
the Crown of  
France, 1205.

the court of peers condemned him to death as contumacious. Normandy, Brittany, Guienne,\* Maine, Anjou, and Touraine, lands which he held in fief from France, were declared confiscated, pertaining to the King, and reunited to the crown. This reunion, however, did not take place without numerous battles and a vast effusion of blood. In this war John was himself his worst enemy: his cruelties, exactions, and avarice roused the people against him; he attacked the clergy through their property, and was soon excommunicated; Pope Innocent III. offered his kingdom to Philip, who assembled an army, intending a descent upon England. John, in alarm, became as humble towards the Church as he had before been insolent; he submitted to the Pope, and did homage to him for his crown. Philip then marched against him in virtue of the Pontifical sentence, but the submission of King John had made a change in the views of the Holy See. It had been for Philip, but was now for the King of England.

\* Guienne, however, remained long subsequently to the kings of England; but Poitou was detached from it by Philip Augustus, who conquered its territory.

Pandolph, legate of the Roman Pontiff, repaired to France and forbade Philip to proceed further; yet, to calm his resentment, he pointed out the Count of Flanders as a rich prey to promise to his army: Flanders might be accepted in exchange for England. Old grievances existed between Ferrand, count of that province, and Philip; the King could now obtain satisfaction by force of arms. Ferrand hastened to league himself with John of England, and with his father Otho IV., Emperor of Germany. The French army met that of the enemy between Lille and Tournay. They joined battle at the bridge of Bouvines; the Emperor and the King of France com-  
Battle of Bouvines, 1214.  
manding in person, when the latter achieved a brilliant victory; five counts, and among them the Count of Flanders, fell into his hands, the communes of five French cities had sent their soldiers to the battle, and they rivalled the knights in glory. Philip was received in Paris amid the acclamations of his people, and the glorious battle of Bouvines, in which he vanquished three sovereigns, prodigiously increased the consideration and renown of the Capetian dynasty in the eyes of Europe.

Nevertheless King John had never intended, in submitting his kingdom to the Church, to sacrifice to it his own criminal passions. He rendered himself so odious and so contemptible that his barons leagued themselves against him, and sword in hand forced him, on the 15th of June, 1215, to sign the charter which has become the basis of the liberties of the English people, and which is known as  
Magna Charta, 1215.  
Magna Charta. By it the King engaged himself not to despoil widows and minors confided to his charge, to raise no taxes without the approbation of his Privy Council or of Parliament, never to imprison, mutilate, or condemn to death freeholders, merchants, or peasants without the consent of twelve of their equals. These clauses and some others appeared intolerable to the despotic King: he only made oath to that Charter in the hope of being released from it by the Pope, and in fact he was so released. His barons then offered the crown to Louis of France, the son of Philip Augustus. This prince, despite his father's vow and the prohibition of the Pope, whose legate excommunicated him, crossed over to England. He was  
Louis of France in England, 1216.  
received with open arms by the barons and possessed himself of the kingdom; but King John died at this time, and

his partisans proclaimed his young son Henry, King. The English people attached themselves to the youth, and Louis, abandoned by his supporters, returned to France, after having contributed to establish on a more solid basis the liberties of England.

Philip Augustus found himself under the ban of excommunication, the common lot up to that time of almost all his race. He was anathematized on the occasion of his third marriage with Agnes de Meran, during the lifetime of his second wife, Ingeburge of Denmark. He showed signs of resistance: all his possessions were placed under interdict. No one could be married, or receive communion, nor could the dead be buried. The people were seized with terror, and the King was finally driven to submit.

A fourth Crusade took place under his reign. It was preached by the enthusiastic Fulk, curé of Nouilly-sur-Marne. The powerful Counts of Flanders and Champagne set the example and took up the Cross; they were followed by Dampierre, by Montmorency, by the famous Simon de Montfort, and a multitude of nobles from the north of France, to whom the Venetians furnished fifty galleys for the transport of the army; the Marquis de Montferrat and the Count of Flanders were the recognized chiefs of this expedition, which was really directed by the old blind Doge Dandolo. It was he who, under pretext of having furnished the expense of their transport, carried the Crusaders to the conquest of Zara, the capital of Dalmatia, which he seized in the name of the Venetian Republic; then, taking advantage of a civil war which was desolating the Byzantine empire, and of the promises of a young Greek prince, who came to the camp of the Crusaders to implore their succour, to re-establish on the throne the Emperor Comnenus, his father, Dandolo pointed out to them that Constantinople was a rich prey and easy to seize, and decided them to commence the Crusade by that conquest. In vain the Pope threw obstacles in the way of this adventurous expedition; in vain a great number of the Crusaders separated themselves from it, and proceeded straight to Palestine. Dandolo threw the army against Constantinople, which disputed with Venice the empire of the sea. The Crusaders carried that famous capital by assault, and re-established on the throne Isaac Comnenus, whom an usurper had driven from it;

Fourth Crusade.  
Taking of Constantinople by  
the Crusaders,  
1202—1204.

but very shortly a popular tumult took place, the old Emperor was strangled, and the Crusaders were obliged once more to gain the city by assault. This time the Greek empire was divided amongst the conquerors, and Baldwin, Count of Flanders, descendant of Charlemagne, elected Emperor. Thus was founded the Latin empire of Constantinople, which endured for fifty-seven years. The Venetians required for their share three of the eight quarters of that city, and obtained besides the greater part of the isles and sea-board of the empire. The Marquis de Montferrat had the kingdom of Thessalonica. The Morea became a principality, and the territory of Athens a feudal duchy. The Crusaders never crossed the Bosphorus.

Foundation of  
the Latin Empire  
of Constanti-  
nople, 1204.

The event which agitated Europe most profoundly during the reign of Philip Augustus was the war of the Albigenses, or the crusade undertaken against the sectarians of the South. There was a great number of these in Provence, in Catalonia, and especially in Languedoc. The inhabitants of these provinces were industrious, given to commerce, to the arts, and to poetry: their numerous cities flourished, governed by consuls under a somewhat republican form of rule. Suddenly this beautiful region was abandoned to the fury of fanaticism, its cities were ruined, its arts and commerce destroyed. All these massacres, all this devastation, had for their end a purpose—the stifling of the first germs of a religious reformation.

Crusade against  
the Albigenses,  
1208—1229.

In these countries the clergy were not distinguished, as in France and in the northern provinces, by their zeal in instruction and in diffusing the light of religion. They were notorious for disorderly living, and fell every day into greater contempt. The need for reform made itself felt before long in the breast of the provincial populations, and many reformers had already appeared. Long before this they had formed themselves into associations, which had for their aim the purification of the morals and doctrines of the Church. There were those of the Patarins,\* and of the Catharins,† or “poor” of Lyons, better known under the name of Vaudois. But the operative reforms extended themselves gradually, the dogmas themselves were attacked, the

\* So called from *pater*, because these sectarians admitted of none but the Lord's Prayer.

† From the Greek *katharos*, pure, on account of the purity of their lives.

priests exposed to the insults of the people, and the domains of the Church invaded. Such was the state of affairs when the famous Innocent III., aged 39, ascended the Pontifical throne in 1198, bringing thereto a domineering spirit, and the fiery energy of a violent and inflexible character. This Pontiff, who kept Europe in fear, sought out and punished any free exercise of thought in religious matters. He was the first to perceive the serious menace to the Romish Church, apparent in a liberty of conscience which went so far as to break into revolt against her tenets. He saw with inquietude and anger the new tendency of feeling in Provence and Languedoc, and proscribed the reformers. Some among them, above all those denominated Albigenses, were Manicheans, that is to say, they admitted the dangerous doctrine of two eternal principles and powers of good and evil; but a great number, known under the name of Vaudois, professed opinions but little different from those which, three centuries later, were preached by Luther. They denied the Transubstantiation in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, rejected confession, and the Sacraments of confirmation and marriage, and stigmatized as idolatry the worship of images. These latter were spread over Lyons, Dauphiné, and Provence; the Albigenses occupied more particularly Languedoc: their principal centres of action were Béziers, Carcassone, above all Toulouse, a very large, powerful, and industrious city, whose count, Raymond VI., was the richest prince in Christendom; his nephew, Raymond Roger, a young man full of ardour and courage, was Count of Béziers. Both the one and the other, without breaking with Rome, had favoured the new doctrines.

Innocent III., impatient to stifle the heresy, sent in the first place inquisitors into the province of Narbonne: they were badly received. The legate Pierre Castelnau succeeded them; he excommunicated Raymond, who, fearing the menaces of the Roman Pontiff, was forced to submit and to permit the persecutions. A gentleman, vassal of the count, indignant at the humiliation of his suzerain and the cruelty of the legate, assassinated the latter, and by this murder gave the Pope pretext to preach a crusade against the dominions of Raymond VI. and of his nephew. The monks of Citeaux seconded the vengeance of Innocent; they offered ample indulgences to all those who would bear arms for forty days

Religious doctrines of the Albigenses.

Assassination of the legate by a gentleman of Toulouse, 1208.



against the sectarians. A multitude of English, French, and Germans, eager to gain them, flocked under the banners of the Pôpe. The immense preparations of the crusaders struck terror into Raymond VI., who, worn with age and unable to offer a vigorous resistance, submitted himself and went to the Abbot of Citeaux, the new legate of the Pope. This latter reconciled him to the Church by causing him to be beaten with rods at the foot of the altar; he ordered him to guide the enemy's columns into the heart of his states, and to deliver up his chief castles. The young Viscount de Béziers, nephew of Raymond, indignant at the pusillanimous conduct of his uncle, declared war, and determined to be buried with his knights in the ruins of his strongholds. The crusaders threw themselves in a body on his lands, seized his castles, burnt all the men they found in them, violated the women, massacred the children, and carried Béziers by assault. An immense number of the inhabitants of the neighbouring country had taken refuge within the walls of that city; the legate being consulted by the conquerors as to the fate of these unhappy creatures, of whom only a portion were heretics, pronounced these execrable words: "*Kill them all; God will know his own.*" A frightful massacre followed these words, and the city was reduced to ashes. The army of crusaders marched thereupon to Carcassonne, and was sharply repulsed by the Viscount de Béziers. This young hero afterwards repaired to the legate to treat for peace, and was captured with three hundred knights in spite of a safe conduct, in virtue of the maxim "that one is not bound to keep faith towards heretics and infidels." The inhabitants of Carcassonne evacuated the city by secret subterranean passages unknown to the crusaders, but four hundred and fifty of them were taken and put to death. The crusaders themselves, weary of such horrors, desired to retire at the end of the forty days. The legate made fruitless efforts to detain them, and gave all the conquered country to the ferocious Simon, Count de Montfort; he delivered over to him also the Viscount de Béziers, who died by poison.

Massacre of  
Béziers, 1209.

Death of the  
Viscount de  
Béziers.

A part only of the Albigenses had been subjected and destroyed in this first crusade. The states of the Count of Toulouse remained intact, and against these in following years the monks of Citeaux preached new crusades throughout Europe. In vain the unfortunate

Count Raymond wished to allay the storm; the Council of Saint Gilles imposed infamous conditions on him, and ordered him to deliver over to the stake those whom the priests pointed out to him. The aged Raymond remembered his heroic nephew, and the thousands of men slain, whose blood cried out for vengeance; his indignation re-animating his valour, and he prepared for war to the death. The crusaders arrived from all parts; Simon de Montfort was at their head and distinguished himself by frightful cruelties: immense piles were prepared; the legate and Foulquet, Bishop of Toulouse, confounded in the same holocaust heretics and Catholics suspected of heresy. The

Battle of Muret, 1213. battle of Muret, fought in 1213, terminated this war; Don Pedro, King of Arragon, who had brought succour to the Count of Toulouse, perished there. The Albigenses were defeated, and that defeat gave a mortal blow to their cause.

The victorious executioners quarrelled among themselves and fought; the people regained courage. Toulouse rose. Montfort made himself master of it by the horrible treachery of the Bishop, Foulquet; the latter invited, in the name of the God of peace, all the inhabitants to come out and meet Montfort, who, with his knights, was awaiting them, and put them all in chains. The war was continued with various success, till at last all Languedoc rose in arms. Montfort was killed before Toulouse, which he was besieging; Count Raymond was recalled, and received in that city with the acclamations of the people: he died, the priests refused him sepulture, and his coffin remained many days exposed at the door of a church. These were the principal events in the wars of the Albigenses, but this was not the end of the misfortunes of that country. The conquerors desired to desolate the very soil which had supported these heretics. The Popes preached new crusades against Raymond VII., son and successor of the old Count Raymond. Great calamities again overwhelmed these people; their cities were destroyed, their fields desolated: at length, after twenty-two years of atrocities, when the language, the arts, and industry of these provinces had disappeared with the reformation, the executioners were wearied, and the war ceased under the following reign, to the great advantage of France. Raymond VII. ceded to it a portion of his territories by the treaty of Paris, signed in 1229.

Cessation of the war against the Albigenses.

Philip Augustus took no active part in this war of extermination ; he sought, on the contrary, to repair its disasters, and while fanaticism was steeping the southern countries with blood, he extended his dominions and rendered them flourishing. The national assemblies had fallen into desuetude : Philip appealed to his chief barons to form his council and sanction his decrees.

Government and  
administration of  
Philip Augustus.

He conquered Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou, formerly forfeited to the King of England ; he conquered also the county of Auvergne. Under his reign Valois, part of Vermandois, and Amienois, fell to the crown by the extinction of the families who possessed them ; this King also re-annexed Artois to his crown by his union with Isabelle of Flanders and Hainault : finally, he gave the inheritance of Brittany to Pierre Mauclerc, a member of his family, and a Capetian dynasty was founded in that country. Thus was formed the new duchy of Brittany, which became one of the great immediate fiefs of the crown of France. These results were as much the work of his policy as of his fortune and valour. He caused his great vassals to bend before him, and obtained by his victories over them the superiority which belonged to him by right of his royal title. The citation of King John to his tribunal, and the judgment pronounced against him, dealt a mortal blow to feudal aristocracy.

New Duchy of  
Brittany.

Philip Augustus was occupied all his life in warfare, treaties, reforms, laws for his fiefs, and secured upon a firm basis the relations between lords and vassals, which until then had been only in an unsettled and arbitrary condition, and was thus the principal founder of feudal monarchy. The military art owed some progress to him ; soldiers received pay, and for this purpose he established the first permanent imposts, he appointed three maritime armaments, and obtained by his activity, his prudence, and his talents, the respect both of sovereigns and people.

Labours of Philip  
Augustus.

The important foundation of the University of Paris dates from this prince, who defined its privileges. The name of University was given to this celebrated school because it was universal in its scope, and admitted masters and students without regard to the nation to which they belonged ; thus,

Foundation of  
the University of  
Paris, 1200.

there were found in it the sections of France, England, Normandy, and Picardy. Paris saw at this time a multitude of colleges spring up in its midst, several of which acquired a great celebrity. All the schools were placed under the authority of the provost of Paris, and Philip Augustus confirmed a bull of Pope Celestin III. by which the scholars were released from ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The University thus rose under the double patronage of the Holy See and of Royalty. It alone possessed the right of granting the degrees of bachelor, licentiate, and doctor in the different faculties of letters and sciences; and though its rights and privileges were frequently the source of great disorders, it acquired a high renown and became one of the great powers of the state. The majority of the students, at that time, devoted themselves to the priesthood: the French Church sought with admirable learning and patience for the scattered memorials of ancient literature, and struggled successfully against barbarism and ignorance. Philip had comprehended the grand effect of the rising University: he encouraged the studies with all his power, and desired that the abode of those who abandoned themselves to learning should be an inviolable asylum. So much care for an object of such general interest did not, however, divert his attention from matters of a secondary importance. Paris, especially, was indebted to him for useful alterations. Up till that time all the streets of the capital became, in rainy weather, infectious sewers; but the principal thoroughfares were paved and embellished by his orders. He enlarged the city, enclosed it with walls, built market-places, and surrounded the Cemetery of the Innocents with cloisters; he built a palace by the side of the large tower of the Louvre, and continued the Cathedral, which had been commenced prior to his reign. He gained by his conquests and institutions the esteem of his contemporaries, and died at Nantes in 1223, after a reign of forty-three years, leaving a portion of his immense wealth to the priests and crusaders, and also making considerable gifts to the poor.

Death of Philip  
Augustus, 1223.

#### LOUIS VIII.

LOUIS VIII., son of Philip Augustus, only reigned three years. This prince, whom his flatterers named Cœur de Lion, was descended on

the female side from Charlemagne, and seemed to unite in his person the claims of the Carlovingian and Capetian houses.

During his father's life he had been recognized King of England by the barons hostile to King John, but being abandoned by his partisans he was obliged to quit the kingdom. On returning to France, he took from the English Poitou, which they had reconquered, as well as several important places in Aunis, Périgord, and Limousin, among others Rochellé, and signalized the end of his reign by a second crusade against the unhappy Albigenes. The principal cities of Languedoc, Beaucaire, Carcassonne, and Béziers, opened their gates to him, and the south of France, with the exception of Guienne and Toulouse, recognized the royal authority. Louis was marching against the latter city when an epidemic fever attacked his army, and he died at Montpensier, either from an attack of the malady, or, as some believed, from poison, administered to him by Thibaut of Champagne, who was violently enamoured of Queen Blanche of Castille, whom the King left a widow, with five children of tender years. The eldest of her sons was St. Louis.

Accession of  
Louis VIII. 1223.

Second crusade  
against the  
Albigenses, 1226.

Death of  
Louis VIII. 1226.

## CHAPTER V.

REIGN OF LOUIS IX. (SAINT LOUIS), 1226-1270.

LOUIS IX., justly venerated under the name of St. Louis, was only eleven years of age on the death of his father, and the regency of the kingdom was disputed between Queen Blanche, his mother, and his uncle, Philip Hurepel, son of Philip Augustus and Agnes de Meran, whose marriage the Church had refused to recognize. A great number of the nobility supported the claims of Philip, and Henry III. of England declared himself their leader; but the devotion of the powerful Thibaut, Count of Champagne, insured the advantage to the queen-mother, and caused the submission of a portion of the rebels. Blanche had a mind at once great, proud, and Christian:

she gave excellent masters to her children, and had them carefully brought up in the fear of God. "My son," she said to the young King, "you know how dear you are to me, and yet I would sooner see you dead than guilty of a mortal sin." This pious Queen also possessed political talent, and kept a firm hand over the malcontent lords, who wished to oppose the coronation of her son. Surprised by their troops on the Orléans road, she took refuge in the tower of Montlhéry and summoned to her aid the citizens of Paris, who arrived in arms to deliver her. She enabled France to reap the fruit of the horrible war with the Albigenses.

Treaty of Paris, 1229. The treaty of Paris, signed in 1229, between her and

Raymond VII., Count of Toulouse, attached to the crown a large portion of Lower Languedoc, forming the seneschalship of Beaucaire and Carcassonne, and Raymond recognized as his heir in the rest of his territory his son-in-law Alphonse, one of the brothers of Louis IX., declaring the inheritance should revert to the crown if there were no child of the marriage of Alphonse with his only daughter, Jane: an eventuality which came to pass. Blanche next brought into

obedience the Dukes of Brittany and Burgundy, in spite of the assistance afforded them by the King of England; and a truce, which terminated this civil war, was signed at St. Aubin du Cormier between her, the barons, and her brother-in-law.

Peace of St.  
Aubin du Cor-  
mier, 1231.

Louis IX. was nineteen years of age when he married Margaret of Provence, then only thirteen. Queen Blanche separated them for six years, and always afterwards showed a jealousy about Margaret's influence over the King. A few years afterwards the sister of this princess married Henry III., King of England, who thus became the brother-in-law of St. Louis. The picture which France presents from the treaty of St. Aubin up to the time when the King attained his majority is that of general peace; but Louis IX. had soon to contend against the great vassals and nobles, to whom his grandfather, Philip Augustus, had dealt such terrible blows. The Counts de la Marche, of Foix, and several other vassals, united with Henry III., who crossed the sea with an army, and claimed the provinces taken from John Lackland. The English and their allies were conquered by Louis at the bridge of Taillebourg, and again before Saintes, which city he united to the crown, with a part of Saintonge, by the treaty of Bordeaux. The rebellious lords submitted to a master who generously pardoned them, and Henry returned to England.

Battle of Taille-  
bourg, 1242.

All the East shook at this time in the expectation of a frightful catastrophe. The Mongols had set themselves in motion, and their countless hordes, emerging from Upper Asia, exterminated every nation they passed through. Their vanguard had invaded the Holy Land, and gained a sanguinary victory over the Christians and Mussulmans, whom terror had united: five hundred Templars were left on the field of battle, and Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of the ferocious conquerors. St. Louis was ill and almost dying when the news of this disaster reached Europe. As soon as he felt better, to the astonishment of all, he ordered that the red cross should be placed on his bed and on his garments, and made a vow to go and fight for the tomb of Christ. His mother and even the priests implored him to renounce this fatal design: it was in vain; and no sooner was he

Invasion of the  
East by Mongols.

Battle of Gaza,  
1244.

convalescent than he summoned his mother and the Bishop of Paris to his bedside, and said to them: "As you believe that I was not perfectly in my senses when I pronounced my vows, here is my cross, which I tear from my shoulders and hand to you. But now you must acknowledge that I am in full possession of my faculties. Restore me my cross, then; for He who knows all things knows also that no food will enter my lips till I have been marked anew with His sign." "It is the finger of God," exclaimed all present; "His will be done."

The religious enthusiasm of Louis grew with his years, and dominated every other feeling in him. It is in his conscience, and not in his interests, that we must seek the motives of all his actions. He joined to an enlightened reason, a tender, pure, and generous mind; but his ardent faith was sometimes blind, and a false scruple on his part caused the greatest misfortunes. Determined on leading an army to the Holy Land, he felt that the safety of that army depended in great measure on the route which he selected for it. The safest was that by Sicily, a country subject to Frederick II.; but this Emperor was excommunicated by the Pope, his implacable enemy, and Louis, after impotent efforts to procure absolution for him, was afraid of halting in the states of a reprobate monarch, and resolved to proceed towards Egypt by Cyprus, instead of going to Syria by Sicily. This pious fault was his ruin. After settling all the affairs of his states and appointing his mother regent, Louis took the pilgrim's staff and the oriflamme from St. Denis, and left Paris on the 12th of June, 1248, to embark at Aigues-Mortes, a town he had founded at a great cost, in order to have a port in the Mediterranean.\*

The King sojourned a year at Nicosium, the capital of Cyprus, and then set out for Egypt. On arriving in sight of Damietta he leaped into the sea, sword in hand, at the head of his knights, repulsed the enemy, and seized this strong city and all its immense resources:

The only course open was to march on Cairo and subjugate Egypt by a rapid invasion; but the swelling of the Nile alarmed the King,

\* This port is now dried up: the water in retiring has left a space of half a league between the sea and the shore.



and he remained for five months inactive at Damietta. At length he left that town, and marched without any precautions on Mansourah. The Turks surrounded him on a burning plain, and hurled on his baggage and camp blazing bitumen, known by the name of "Greek fire." Louis, in this desperate situation, made a violent effort: he gave orders for the battle; the Count Artois, Battle of Mansourah, 1249. his brother, rushed imprudently on Mansourah and surprised the town, but was surrounded there and killed, with the knights who followed him. The King, who had been unable to relieve them, fell back on a camp of the Saracens, carried it and shut himself up in it, but his position became as dangerous there as his preceding one. Disease and repeated assaults carried off one half of his army, and he was himself taken dangerously ill. He ordered a retreat on Damietta, where he had left the Queen and a powerful garrison, but Turkish galleys blocked the passage of the river, and finding himself without resources he fell a prisoner, with all his knights, into the hands of the Mussulmans. A great number of his soldiers apostatized to escape death, but he, thrown into irons and under the most atrocious menaces, preserved the majesty of a king and the resignation of a Christian. Queen Margaret, at Damietta, proved herself worthy of her husband. On hearing of the reverses of the army she shuddered at the thought of falling into the hands of the Turks, and asked an old knight who never left her to grant her one favour, that of running her through with his sword, rather than allow the Mussulmans to seize her. "I had thought of that, Madam," replied the old warrior. But Damietta was not taken by storm: Margaret kept the city as a pledge for the safety of the King, and it was offered with 400,000 livres for the royal ransom. At this price Louis recovered his liberty. His barons returned to France, but he remained four years longer in Syria, exhorting his knights to rejoin him, and employing his treasures in fortifying Tyre, Sidon, and all the other places in Palestine that belonged to the Christians.

Before the news of his deliverance became known a crusade of a new description was set on foot. The people felt as much love for the King as hatred for the nobles who oppressed them. A man suddenly appeared who affirmed that he had received from the Virgin a letter,

which he held in one of his hands, which was always closed. She ordered him, so he said, to collect all the Christian shepherds he could find and march at their head to deliver the King. Victory was refused to the mighty, and promised to the feeble and humble. This uneducated man possessed eloquence, and ere long a multitude of shepherds followed his flag, and outlaws and bandits also joined themselves to him. The priests excommunicated this undisciplined mob, who avenged themselves by massacring a great number of ecclesiastics at Orleans. Queen Blanche, who at first had favoured the association, from this moment did everything in her power to dissolve it. The preachers of the shepherds excited the people against the priests. They were in the habit of preaching surrounded by a guard of armed men; and one day Blanche introduced among them an executioner, who stepped behind their chief, and with one stroke sent his head rolling at the feet of his horrified audience. Knights then galloped up and dispersed the shepherds, who were massacred by the people who had previously honoured them.

Queen Blanche died in 1253, after a wise regency, and the King felt the most bitter grief at his loss. He returned to France, and made his entry into Paris, in September, 1254, displaying on his countenance the seared impression of all his disasters.

On his return, Louis occupied himself actively with the reformation of his kingdom, and displayed the lofty qualities of a legislator. He completely destroyed the sovereign authority of the nobles by depriving them of the right of dealing justice arbitrarily. An important discovery seconded his efforts:

Crusade of the Christian shepherds.

Death of Queen Blanche, and return of the King 1254.

Legislation and administration of Saint Louis.

the code of Roman laws known by the name of the Pandects of Justinian, and which governed the Empire of Constantinople, became known at this period in France. This collection of laws, so justly celebrated, had, at the time, such a superiority over every other code, that it was hailed as written reason. It gave a living impulse to the minds of men, and its application was immediately demanded; but the ignorance of the nobles was so great that it was found necessary to call in men versed in the study of the laws to explain it. Saint Louis was the first to introduce these lawyers into a parliament, which he

constituted as a court of justice. This court was composed of three high barons, three prelates, nineteen knights, and eighteen clerks, or lawyers, who drew up the decrees. The latter succeeded in securing the entire management of affairs by disgusting the barons through the wearisomeness of the proceedings; they then exercised a portion of the feudal authority, and wished to render that of the King absolute by actively seconding him in all his projects of reform and attacks upon feudal rights.

This pious and humane monarch attempted to put an end to the private wars between his barons, and prohibited judicial combats. He decreed that when an insult was offered, the two parties, before having recourse to arms, should observe a truce of forty days, called "the king's quarantine," thus granting time for passions to calm. He ordered that judicial debates should be substituted for judicial combats; and considerably enlarged the authority of the Crown by establishing "royal cases," in which he himself heard causes between his subjects and their lords. The lawyers gave the greatest extension to these appeals. Nor did the King permit cities to be rendered independent of his authority; he transformed many *communes* into royal towns by the ordinance of 1256, which ordered them to put forward four candidates, from among whom the King should choose the mayor, who was to be responsible to him for his conduct. It was then settled that the King alone had the right to make *communes*, that they should owe him fidelity against all, and that the title of "King's citizen" should be a safeguard under all circumstances.

The name of "Establishments of Saint Louis" has been given to a collection of decrees passed by this King for the people of his domains. This celebrated collection contains wise and useful laws against venality in the administration of justice, the greediness of creditors, imprisonment for debt, and usurious profits. Louis IX. also displayed the independence and firmness of his judicious mind by publishing the Pragmatic \* Sanction, which became the Pragmatic  
Sanction. basis of the liberties of the Gallican or French Church. This famous ordinance prohibited the raising of money for the Court of Rome within the kingdom without the King's permission, and fixed the cases in which it would be permissible to appeal from ecclesiastic to royal

\* This word is derived from the Greek *pragma*, which means "a rule."

justice. Lastly, in spite of his great devotion, he managed to keep in check the extravagant zeal of the bishops. "Several prelates," says Joinville, "having come to see the King at the palace, the Bishop of Auxerre said to him, 'Sire, the lords here present, archbishops and bishops, have commissioned me to tell you that Christianity is perishing in your hands.' The King crossed himself and asked, 'How so?' 'Sire,' the bishop resumed, 'because so little heed is paid to-day, and every day, to excommunications, that people will die excommunicated rather than obtain absolution, and will not give satisfaction to the Church. The prelates enjoin you, Sire, by the love of God, to command your provosts and bailiffs that all those who remain excommunicated for a year and a day shall be forced to seek absolution by the seizure of their property.' The King replied that he would readily give such an order with respect to all those who were proved to him to be in the wrong. The bishop said that it was not for the King to judge their causes; but the King replied that he would not order otherwise, for it would be contrary to God and all reason if he forced people to obtain absolution when the clerks acted unjustly to them. 'As an example of this,' the King added, 'I will give you the Count of Brittany, who has pleaded for seven years, while excommunicated, against the prelates of Brittany, and has eventually induced the Pope to condemn them all. Hence, if I had constrained the Count of Brittany in the first year to obtain absolution I should have acted wrongly towards God and towards him.'"

Louis's last reform was that of the coinage. Eighty nobles had the right of coining in their domains, but Louis fixed the value of the coinage in each case, and brought his own everywhere into currency. He also effected greater security on the highways of the kingdom, by obliging the nobles who levied a toll to guarantee the security of the roads through their domains.

So much care devoted to the prosperity of the kingdom and to the salutary establishment of his authority did not so fully occupy the great mind of this King as to divert him from occupations of less general interest, but of no less useful kind. He founded a public library in Paris; created the hospital of the Quinze-vingts, intended to receive 300 blind people; and built the Holy Chapel, which may still be

Important foundations: The Quinze-vingts, the Holy Chapel, the Sorbonne.

admired at Paris, near the Palace of Justice, at that period the palace of the King. During his reign, Robert de Sorbon also founded the college which bears his name—the Sorbonne, which became the seat of the celebrated faculty of theology, whose decisions were so respected that it was called “the perpetual Council of Gaul.”

This King's truly great and really Christian piety did not solely consist in the external observance of the practices of the Church: it sprang from the heart, and consisted chiefly <sup>Piety of Louis the Ninth.</sup> in the love of God and an internal sanctity of the soul. Appropriate to this, Joinville relates an affecting interview which he had with this prince: “‘Seneschal,’ the King said to me, in the presence of several priests, ‘what is God?’ And I answered him, ‘Sire, so good a thing that there can be nothing better.’ ‘Truly,’ the King replied, ‘that is a very good answer, for the answer you have made is written in this book which I hold in my hand. Now, I ask you, which would you prefer: to be a leper, or to have committed a mortal sin?’ And I, who never lied to him, replied, that ‘I would sooner have committed thirty, than be a leper.’ And when the brothers had departed, he called me aside, made me sit at his feet, and said, ‘You speak without reflection, like a thoughtless man; for there is no leprosy so villanous as that of being in deadly sin, because the soul then resembles the fiend of hell. This is why no leprosy can be so loathsome. When a man dies, he is cured of the leprosy of the body; but when the man who has committed a deadly sin dies, it is not certain that he has been so penitent as to cause God to pardon him. Thence he should feel a great fear lest this leprosy may endure so long as God is in Paradise. Therefore, I pray you,’ he added, ‘as strongly as I can, that, for the love of God and myself, you will prefer to have any malady affect your body rather than a mortal sin affect your soul.’ Then he asked me if I washed the feet of the poor on Holy Thursday? ‘Sire,’ I said to him, ‘I will never wash the feet of those churls.’ ‘Truly,’ he replied, ‘that is wrongly spoken, for you ought not to hold in disdain what God has done for our instruction. Hence I pray you, for the love of God and me, to accustom yourself to wash the feet of the poor.’”

Joining to this touching piety a great zeal for equity, Louis himself taught the respect due to the laws. He liked to render justice to his

subjects in person. "Many times," Joinville also says, "it happened that in summer he would go and sit in the wood of Vincennes after mass, and leaning against an oak, he made us sit down round him, and all those who had business came to speak with him freely, unimpeded by ushers or others."

More than once he passed severe sentences on members of his own family, and nobles with whom he was intimate. Still, in spite of such wisdom and pure zeal, he committed several faults, the consequence of errors which belonged to his age rather than to himself: laid cruel penalties on Jews and heretics; and four hundred and fifty bankers or merchants of Asti were seized by his orders and cast into dungeons for lending money on interest, though at a very moderate rate.\* A scruple fatal to France disturbed the mind of this holy monarch. The conquests of Philip Augustus and the confiscation of the property of the English crown oppressed him, and appeared to him in the light of usurpations; and he concluded at Abbeville, in

Treaty of Abbeville. Restoration of a portion of the conquests of Philip Augustus.

1259, contrary to the advice of his barons and his family, a treaty, by which he restored to Henry III. Périgord, Limousin, Agenois, Querey, and Saintonge;

while Henry on his side gave up his claims to Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Touraine, and Poitou. The prejudices and scruples of Saint Louis alone urged him to conclude this unfavourable treaty, which the English monarch could never have obtained by force. This prince was at the time at war with his barons, who extorted from him the concessions known as "the Provisions

Arbitration of Louis IX. between Henry III. and his barons.

of Oxford," by which they exercised a portion of the royal authority. Such was the reputation of Saint Louis, that by common accord he was selected as arbitrator between them and their sovereign. He decided in favour of Henry III., and the Provisions of Oxford were annulled.

Almost at the same time that Louis signed the treaty of Abbeville he signed with the King of Arragon the treaty of Corbeil, by which that prince gave up all the fiefs he still possessed in Languedoc, and his claims to Provence; in return for which France surrendered her suzerainty over the countries of Bar-

Treaty of Corbeil, 1264.

\* According to the Laws of the Church, and in the ideas of the middle ages, lending money on interest was regarded as a crime.

celona, Roussillon, and Cerdagne. The King of Arragon only retained in France the lordship of Montpellier, and the Pyrenees became the frontier of the two States.

Saint Louis had lost his eldest son, and several members of his family proved to be turbulent and dangerous to France. Charles of Anjou, his brother, an ambitious and cruel prince, heir by his marriage with Beatrice of Provence to the powerful counts of that name,\* caused him very great anxiety, and, with the intention of removing him, Louis favoured his projects with regard to Naples and Sicily, then possessions of the Imperial crown.

The illustrious house of Suabia was humbled; Frederic II., its last Emperor, met with his death in struggling against the Pope, who sold his heritage, and offered to the King of France the kingdom of Naples, where Manfred, the bastard son of Frederic II., then reigned. Saint Louis refused the offer for himself, but allowed his brother to accept it. Charles of Anjou left France with an army gathered together in Provence; and six years later, in 1266, the battle of *Grandella*, where Manfred perished, placed the crown of Naples and Sicily securely on his head.

Foundation of the first house of Anjou, at Naples. Battle of Grandella, 1266.

The East now attracted more forcibly than ever the attention of Saint Louis. The Roman Empire in Constantinople was no more; the Greeks had retaken that city in 1261. Taking advantage of the divisions among the Christians in Syria, Bendocdard, the sultan of Egypt, made a series of rapid conquests in Palestine: Cæsarea, Jaffa, and Antioch, had fallen into his power, and a hundred thousand Christians had been massacred in the last-named town. On receiving intelligence of this frightful disaster, Saint Louis made a vow that he would take up the Cross for the second time. After making pilgrimages to the principal churches in his

Fall of the Roman Empire in Constantinople, 1261.

\* Provence had for a long time formed part of the kingdom of Arles, composed of the two Burgundies, Cis and Transjuran. In 1033 Conrad II., having joined this kingdom to the German Empire, Provence, which comprised the four republics of Nice, Arles, Avignon, and Marseilles, was detached from it and remained independent under sovereign counts. Raymond Berengarius was the last, and Beatrice, his daughter and heiress, having married Charles, Count of Anjou, Provence passed into the possession of the latter; who soon after became King of Naples and Sicily. Such was the origin of the powerful house of the Counts of Anjou, Kings of Sicily, and Counts of Provence, which became extinct with "Good King René," who died in 1480.

kingdom, he embarked again at Aigues-Mortes, in 1270, and set sail for Tunis. He had appointed a rendezvous with his brother, Charles d'Anjou, within the walls of ancient Carthage. He disembarked opposite to this ruined town, and had to suffer an infinity of evils, from the dryness of

Sixth Crusade.  
Second De-  
parture of Saint  
Louis for the  
Holy Land, 1270.

the soil, the heat of the sun, and the arrows of the Moors. The plague carried away part of his army, which he was compelled to hold back in fatal inaction; it struck down his second son, the Count de Nevers, and he himself was attacked at the end of a month. He employed his last moments in giving good counsels to Philip, his third son and his heir. "Dear son," said he to him, "the first thing that I wish to impress upon thee is that thou love God; for without that no one can be saved. . . . Have a gentle and compassionate heart for the poor, for the feeble, and comfort and aid them whenever it is in thy power. Maintain the good customs of the kingdom, and destroy the bad. Do not covet the property of thy people, and do not charge it with rates or taxes. . . . Be careful to have the society of prudent men, and loyal, who are not full of covetousness. Flee and escape from the society of evil men. Listen willingly to the word of God, and retain it in thy heart; seek also willingly for prayers and pardons. Love thine honour, and hate evil, of whatever nature it may be: Be loyal and firm in rendering justice to thy subjects, neither turning to the right hand nor to the left; but aid and sustain the cause of the poor until the truth is brought to light. Guard the customs of thy kingdom, and if there be anything to amend, amend it and correct it. Give the livings of the holy Church to good men, with spotless lives, and act under the advice of men of probity. Keep thyself from being moved into war, without great necessity, against Christian men. Take care that the expenses of thy household are reasonable. Lastly, dear son, see that masses are sung for my soul, and prayers offered up for thy kingdom. . . . I bestow on you all the blessings that a good father can give to his son. . . . May God give you grace to do always His will, in order that after this mortal life we may be with Him, my son, and praise Him together." \*

The King delivered himself up at last entirely to religious observances; he expressed a wish before death to be raised from his bed and

\* Mémoires du Sire du Joinville.



laid upon ashes, and there he expired, holding the crucifix in his arms. "On the Monday, the good King raised his clasped hands to heaven, and said:—'Lord God, have mercy on the people who dwell here, and conduct them into their own land; let them not fall into the hands of their enemies; and let them not be led to forswear Thy holy name!' Shortly before his death, and while he was slumbering, he sighed and said, in a low tone, 'O Jerusalem! O Jerusalem!'" \* His last thoughts were concerning God, the Holy City, and France, and he gave up the ghost on the 25th of August, 1270, after having appointed as regents of the kingdom, Mathieu de Saint-Denis and Roger de Nesle. No other king was more Death of Saint Louis, 1270. worthy of the admiration of his fellow-men, and alone, out of all his race, the Church bestowed on him the honours of canonization.

\* *Petri Epist. ap. Spicilegium.*

## CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS UPON THE STATE OF FRANCE, AND UPON THE  
EVENTS WHICH TRANSPIRED DURING THE PAST THREE CENTURIES, FROM  
THE ACCESSION OF HUGH CAPET TO THE DEATH OF SAINT LOUIS.

THE two hundred and ninety years of which we are about to trace the principal events were fertile with calamities and also with progress. Among the latter, the most worthy of attention are the gradual and constant increase of the royal authority, the birth of the *bourgeoisie*, or the Third Estate, which, almost imperceptible at the end of the tenth century, started into existence suddenly towards the year 1100, as a social power in the first communal revolutions, and finished by absorbing nearly the whole nation.

We have shown, in the preceding chapters, the gradual and successive progress of royalty; we have seen it grow great under Louis the Fat, then afterwards to acquire reality under Philip Augustus,

by the prodigious extension given to the possessions of the Crown; by the building of large ships; and by the superiority which public opinion accorded to it in

virtue of an ancient right attached to the royal title and majesty. We see it later adding to its prerogatives by the wise decrees of Saint Louis, and removing from the nobles the essential rights of feudal power, by the restrictions placed on private warfare, and above all by the establishment of a court of justice. The people recognized, in the authority of the monarch, the sole power capable of struggling with success against their numerous oppressors. They desired that this authority should be powerful and awe-inspiring, hoping in case of need to lean upon it, and applauded with fervour its rapid progress, which was then of a noble and incontestible utility. Louis the Fat, in fact, bestowed upon royalty its character of public power and protection; Philip Augustus reconstructed the kingdom, and inspired in the people under his sceptre the sentiment of nationality;

Conquests by the  
Crown under the  
Feudal system.

Louis IX. impressed on his government a character of equity, a respect for the public rights, and a love for the public welfare, unknown until his time. At this time, then, the development of the royal power had produced an epoch of happiness for France ; but the progress of this power afterwards, without any counterbalance, insomuch as it is considered connected with the true interests and prosperity of the nation, ceased with Saint Louis, and was afterwards suspended during more than a hundred and fifty years.

This prince did not regard his authority as absolute ; it had, however, no precise limit with him, and the proneness towards despotism was easy. Royalty, upon thus being abandoned to it, created great perils against France and against itself. Before recalling the new destinies, it is necessary to throw a glance at the results which had been produced upon the civilization and manners of the French by the great events which had agitated Europe for three centuries. One of the most remarkable facts of this important period was the rapid development of the middle classes. It will be convenient, in the first place, in order to give an account of this, to examine the principal constituent elements of the *communes* of France, and the manner in which the greater part obtained their charters of freedom.

Ancient Gaul was then divided into two parties, distinguished by their language. The provinces of the North, where they spoke the Roman Walloon dialect,\* were called Provinces of the Langue d'Oil, in consequence of the inhabitants making use of the word *oil* instead of *oui* when answering in the affirmative ; they were ruled by customs derived probably from ancient Gaul, or perhaps from the German people. The provinces of the South, where they spoke the Roman Provençal, received from the monosyllable *oc*, of which the meaning is equally affirmative, the name of the Provinces of the Langue d'Oc ; they were ruled by the Roman or written law. A great number of the towns throughout the southern provinces had preserved the form of municipal government which they had held under the Romans ; others had for a long time lost the liberties which that power had bestowed on them. As to the towns of recent origin, they were built

Division of Gaul  
into the Langue  
d'Oc, and the  
Langue d'Oil.

State of the  
towns in the  
eleventh and  
twelfth centuries.

\* That is to say, one composed of corrupt Latin mixed with the language of ancient Gaul. The Walloon country comprised a portion of Belgium.

under the auspices of the most powerful noble in the province or neighbourhood, and their inhabitants enjoyed those civil rights and privileges which it pleased that nobleman to grant or guarantee to them. At the time when the feudal system was established, the nobles, both ecclesiastical and lay, opposed with all their power the municipal franchises. They substituted in great part their own authority where franchises existed, and usurped all the rights where the franchises were either destroyed or unknown. Those also who, in the hope of increasing the population of their fiefs, had guaranteed rights and liberties to men who came to settle there, afterwards violated, for the most part, their engagements and their charters. Nearly all raised arbitrary taxes in the towns, forbade the citizens to unite together and arm themselves for the common defence, and usurped the right of high and low justice. They disposed also of the fortunes and the lives of the citizens, and their oppression soon became intolerable. Reduced to despair, the oppressed people frequently had recourse to arms; they recalled their ancient franchises, requested guarantees for their property and persons, and took advantage of the avidity of the nobles either to buy back again or conquer their liberties.

The period when the energy of the inhabitants of the towns roused itself coincides with that of the first Crusade; that event  
*Enfranchisement of the communes.* had a powerful though indirect influence upon the enterprise, and was favourable to it. The nobles needed gold for their distant expeditions; large numbers consented, on receiving considerable sums of money, to resign an authority which a great portion of them had usurped. They quitted France for a lengthened period, taking with them in their suite a multitude of knights, who, under their orders, had been the terror of both town and country. The absence of the oppressing party or the weakening of their numbers favoured the citizens in their attempts at independence; but they did not unite everywhere so easily. Many towns, after having bought their franchises, were obliged to resort to arms in order to preserve them. These liberties differed slightly from those which secured municipal institutions; but they gave to those holding them a certain extension and offered more guarantee. Citizens obtained by them the right to form *conjurations* or *communes*, that is to say, to defend themselves

with arms, to elect their mayors, their civil magistrates, their councilmen, to assess their own taxes, to dispense justice, and manage their own public affairs as they pleased. The engagements which they undertook amongst them indicated a deep feeling for the rights of humanity, and their oath had a grand character of independence and energy. They assembled in the principal church or in the market-place, and there they swore on holy relics that they would support each other. All those who bound themselves in this manner took the name of *communiers* or of *jurés*, and these titles expressed the idea of reciprocal devotedness. The liberties which they asked for, however, were not political liberties, such as we understand them at the present day. They did not request the power to make laws and participate in the government of the State, they wished to obtain strong guarantees against servitude, and to free themselves from an insupportable tyranny. They demanded the right to acquire property and preserve it, to live in security under established laws, and lastly, that civil liberty which at the present day social progress assures to every citizen in nearly every part of Europe.

After being constituted, the first act of a *commune* was to choose a tower in order to establish a *bell* or *belfry*, and the first clause of the oath taken by the inhabitants was the obligation to repair to the public place of the town, fully armed, as soon as the sound of this bell was heard. The communes enfranchised by the nobles engaged generally to give them a part of the harvests, to pay a rent for each person, and another for each room in their house, and the monopoly of the mills and ovens, while the inhabitants were bound to a personal service of a fixed number of days. Lastly, the merchants were obliged to hold an open credit with their ancient master, up to a certain sum. Notwithstanding these hard conditions, and the most solemn oaths, a great number of nobles wished to break the treaties, the price of which they had spent, as soon as they felt powerful enough to violate them with impunity. The citizens struggled almost everywhere with courage, but they understood the necessity of obtaining a sanction which would be respected by the nobles themselves. They appealed to the kings, and prayed to be delivered from the charters of enfranchisement, and to be taken under their protection. The kings of France saw in this demand a source of riches for themselves and a means of

patronage directly opposed to the nobles, whom they distrusted ; they sold, then, their support to the communes of the kingdom, and so added much to their own authority. Louis VI. was the first who granted these charters, but he did not create the communes, nor did he enfranchise their inhabitants. The towns conquered their liberties for themselves, and the King only made legitimate liberties already obtained, by selling his supreme sanction. These royal acts, done with that special motive, strengthened the monarchy, by uniting its cause with that of the people. But at this period the effective royal power only made itself felt between the Somme and the Loire, and the only towns to which Louis VI. sold his charters were Beauvais, Noyon, Soissons, Amiens, Saint-Riquier, Saint-Quentin, and Abbeville. In the other parts of France proper, the kings, until the time of Saint Louis, had no part in the maintenance of the liberties of the communes, as the counts would not suffer the royal intervention.

In the towns of the southern country the establishment of communes met with fewer obstacles than in the north, the struggle was shorter, and the success more decisive ; the feudal system laid itself less heavily upon them ; while the greater part preserved something of the ancient municipal institutions which Rome had bestowed on them. These flourishing towns, such as Arles, Narbonne, and Toulouse, kept up, besides, frequent commercial relations with the cities of Lombardy, where the republican spirit commenced to rule, and we see rapidly the *consulat municipal* \* pass from Italy into southern France : there the commercial system only helped to develope and guarantee the liberty of the citizens.

We have seen the restrictions brought to bear by Saint Louis on the independence of the towns which he preserved from anarchy by maintaining there the royal authority : wisely checked, the communal revolution was fruitful in happy results. The country gentlemen living near the towns envied the fate of their inhabitants ; a large number of them abandoned their seigneurial lands, in order to become themselves members of the communes, and many towns, of which the population increased by this means, placed their walls farther back. It was in

\* Until the French Revolution, the name of *consul* was preserved by the municipal magistrats of the towns of the south. At Toulouse the *hotel-de-ville* is still called the *apitole*.

this manner that the power of the cities increased by degrees, while that of the châteaux was enfeebled. When each person in the towns had obtained security for his life, for his fortune, and for the free enjoyment of the fruits of his work, industry arose and commerce extended itself. The bourgeois class became every day stronger, richer, more respectable; the general feeling of ease increased, and civilization made rapid steps. This progress was more perceptible and more prompt in Flanders than in the other countries of the north. The maritime situation of most of the great cities favoured the establishment of manufactories which enriched the citizens, and accustomed them at all times to unite together all their efforts against ravages by sea. After having ascertained that it was sufficient for them to associate together to rule the ocean, they were all prepared to unite in order to struggle against feudal oppression and to triumph over it.

But among all the events which characterized the eleventh and twelfth centuries, those which ruled the epoch, and which exercised the greatest influence upon the spirit, the manners, and the existence of all classes of the nation, were the *Crusades*. Influence of the Crusades upon manners. Until then the wild valour of the warriors of the East, excited by a thirst for domination and riches, had only had for its aim conquests of a material kind. The Crusades in the Holy Land did not soften the soldier-rudeness of manners; but they gave to courage a more noble and more elevated aim. They spiritualized its origin. Men accustomed themselves to fight, to undergo the most cruel privations, to give their lives for something that was immaterial and ideal, for a cause that elevated their souls; they felt themselves destined for another end than that of gratifying their own gross inclinations. Those distant expeditions, in transporting innumerable multitudes to so great a distance from their country, weakened the national hates and prejudices of the different classes. It was impossible that so many men, armed for the same cause, could close their hearts to all sentiment of fraternity. The manners of the nobility, above all, proved the happy effects of the Crusades. The religious enthusiasm gave birth to chivalry, which shone forth with the most sparkling brilliancy at the end of this epoch. To serve God, and Chivalry. to cherish and respect his lady, to defend intrepidly, lance in hand, towards and against all, this double object of an enthusiastic worship,—

such was the duty of a *preux chevalier*. Domesticity was considered noble service; the court of the sovereign, the castles of the nobles, became schools where young gentlemen learnt to serve under the names of varlets, gallants, knights, and to merit also themselves the supreme honour of chivalry. The study of letters or science did not enter into the education of a gentleman, who passed for an accomplished man when he knew how to pray to God, to serve the ladies, to fight, to hunt, and to manage his horse and lance. Beyond that his ignorance was absolute, and we must attribute, above all things, to the want of intellectual instruction, the singular mixture of fanatical superstition, brutal violence, sincere purity, enthusiasm for women, and the mixture of courtesy and ferocity which the chivalresque character displayed for so long a time.

It is to the first Crusade that we must go back for the usages concerning the family names of the nobility. It was necessary in these immense collections of men of many nations, that every knight should be recognized by a name that should be proper to himself, and for the most part they adopted that of their fief. Armorial bearings. Heraldry. Armorial bearings and heraldic emblems are of the same date. An extraordinary brilliancy was connected in public opinion with the exploits of the Crusades. The nobles, in order to perpetuate the remembrance of them, placed in their castles, in the most conspicuous place, the banners under which they had fought in the Holy Land; they were the monuments of their glory, and the members of their families, on going out themselves, communicated these signs of illustration. The ladies embroidered the device on their furniture, on their robes, and on those of their husbands; the warriors caused them to be painted upon their shields, and indicated in an abridged manner the exploits that these ensigns recalled. An arch signified a bridge defended or taken; by a battlement, a tower was designated; by a helmet, the complete armour of a vanquished enemy. Each of these distinctive signs became the escutcheon of a family, and the domestics exhibited themselves bedizened with it on the occasion of ceremonies. Heraldry was the art of interpreting these emblems; it was in principle a species of language by which alliances and rights to public esteem were made known.

The first essays of French poetry belong to this time. The *trouvères*



in the north, and the *troubadours* in the south, composed songs which the *minstrels* or *singers* recited from castle to castle, accompanying themselves on instruments. The *trouvères* were distinguished above all in the epic style. The adventures of the Crusades or some marvellous legend inspired them. Their most celebrated works are: *L'Alexandre*, by Alexandre de Bernay (the originator of the Alexandrine verse); *Gérard de Nevers*, by Gilbert de Montreuil; *Garin le Loherain*, by Jehan de Flagy; and above all the famous *Roman de la Rose*, or the Art of Loving, by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung. To them also we are indebted for several lays, virolays, and fables, remarkable for their natural grace.

The troubadours, on the contrary, among whom we reckon Bertrand de Born, Raimond Béranger, Arnould Daniel, William IX. Count of Poitiers, cultivated in preference the lyric style, which they named the "gay science."

The French language then disengaged itself from the Latin forms, and became that of the legists, of the chroniclers and romancers, or *trouvères*. The *Assises* or laws of the kingdom of Jerusalem were written in this language, so also were the chronicles of Ville-Hardouin, Marshal of Champagne, who describes the fourth Crusade; and that of the Sire de Joinville, a biography of Saint Louis. This latter work, charmingly written, is perhaps the most curious monument of the French language in the thirteenth century.

The arts also made progress during the period of the Crusades. We see these arising in several of the most curious monuments of architecture, called Ogival, which we admire in the Gothic cathedrals. These were decorated with the productions of a statuary, coarse as yet, but full of originality, and by the rich paintings which illuminate their glass, of which the secret, it is said, goes back as far as the tenth century. The greatest progress in painting at this period manifested itself in the *chefs-d'œuvre* in miniature which decorated the missals and the *livres d'heures*, of which a great number have been handed down from age to age, and are still admired at the present day.

Architecture,  
Sculpture,  
Painting.

Tournaments also date their birth from the same period. These military games were intimately connected with the manners of chivalry. The times which preceded and followed that of chivalry offer nothing resembling them. People

Tournaments.

hurried from all parts of the kingdom, as to national fêtes; gentlemen fought there armed cap-à-pie, with lances, axes, and swords, of which the steel had been blunted; sometimes the combat was allowed to proceed to extremity. The cavaliers sought to surpass each other in the games, not only in magnificence but in strength, in address, and in courage. They appeared there distinguished by their mottoes, under the eyes of kings, of princes, and of ladies, the applause of whom they were ambitious to gain: the ladies gave the prizes to the victors. The tournaments were regulated by a particular legislation, of which the principal author was Geoffroi de Preuilly.

The most celebrated religious military orders were founded by the French on the occasion of the first Crusade, and from France they spread themselves over the whole of Europe. The first Religious Orders, were the *Hospitallers of Saint John* and the *Templars*; they devoted themselves humbly to the service of the Holy Land, and from soldier-monks, as they were at first, they became sovereigns. A third order, that of the *Antonines*, consecrated themselves to the relief of those who were attacked by a species of plague called *holy fire*. It is to Christian charity that humanity was indebted for the foundation of Ecclesiastical Orders, which, for the most part, enriched at last by pious largesses, deviated from their aim, and degenerated from their holy origin. The orders of Hospitallers, instituted for the purpose of ransoming prisoners taken by the Infidels, and for the relief of the sick, were founded later; also the celebrated order of the *Dominicans* or *Frères prêcheurs*, and also that of the *Franciscans* or *Cordeliers*, so called from the cord which served them for a girdle. These two last were called *mendicant orders*, because they made a vow of poverty and lived upon alms, according to the formal instructions of their illustrious founders Saint François d'Assise and Saint Dominique de Guzman. They acquired great power in a short time; in virtue of papal commissions they preached, administered the sacraments, and directed the consciences of kings and people, thus taking away by degrees all the functions of the bishops and of the secular clergy.\* *Not having anything, they possess all things*, said the chancellor Pierre des Vignes

\* The secular clergy was so called because it lived in the world, in the siècle. It was composed of all the ecclesiastics who were not under vows in a religious community. The ecclesiastical members of communities, or inhabitants of convents, composed the regular clergy.

to the Emperor Frederic II. They sapped into the bases of the ancient hierarchy of the Church; for they annulled in some sort the power of the bishops, whose authority they braved. They wished also to direct the schools and to take to themselves the chairs of the University, where the secular clergy still ruled. The latter resisted, and an obstinate struggle resulted. The dispute lasted thirty years, and was prolonged during a large portion of the reign of Saint Louis. At last, after lengthened storms and reciprocal excommunications, the University was compelled to yield by Pope Alexander IV. The mendicant orders obtained some of the chairs in the schools, and the University conferred the grade of Doctor upon two illustrious members of these orders, on the Franciscan, Bonaventura, and on the Dominican, Saint Thomas d'Aquinas, who was surnamed the *Angel of the School*, and whose theological writings excited the enthusiastic admiration of his contemporaries.

Struggle of the  
Mendicant  
Orders against  
the University.

The religious movement of the Crusades was very favourable to this prodigious increase of the power of the monks, and provoked the establishment of a multitude of pious foundations. The vast and magnificent monasteries of *Cluny* and *Citeaux* were gorged with wealth; they served as places of assembly for the nobility, and the abbés were admitted into the councils of the kings.

The Crusades communicated in everything a lively and strong impulse to civilization and to manners. Propitious to the enfranchisement of the communes, they favoured also the progress of the bourgeoisie by the extension which they gave to commerce. The delicacies of the East caused new wants to arise; the merchants, hitherto despised, acquired more consideration, and formed the link between Europe and Asia. Maritime commerce, above all, which scarcely existed before the Crusades, acquired by them a very vast development; European industry gained equally by the expeditions of the Crusaders. Silk stuffs, spices, perfumes, and the other treasures of the East, were known in Europe from the time of the Carlovingsians; but they were only seen in the courts of princes or the dwellings of the great. During this period the art of dyeing the tissues of silk was brought to perfection, and amongst the principal conquests of industry in the thirteenth century we must reckon saffron,

Commerce.  
Industry.

indigo, the sugar-cane, and the art of extracting its precious contents. The rich tissues of Damascus, the glass of Tyre, imitated in Venice, and which was afterwards substituted for metallic mirrors, windmills, and cotton stuffs, were also made known at this period to Europeans, who learnt at the same time damaskeening, the engraving of seals and money, and the manner of applying enamel to metals. The towns had become, partly by the effect of the Crusades, the centres of free activity, of commerce, and of wealth; luxury extended itself in every direction. The manner of living, of furnishing, of feeding, became different; ease increased in the houses of the nobles and the bourgeoisie, and the Third Estate made with these rapid progress.

Progress of the  
Third Estate.

In all the towns workmen of different professions formed particular associations, called *corporations*, in which the members found a support in one another, and an assistance for the aged, the widows, and the orphans. Each of these was instituted under the invocation of a saint, who was looked upon as its patron. They had all chiefs, and syndics or juries, who prevented frauds and watched the observation of the rules. These assured to the members of each corporation the monopoly of their industry after a long and severe apprenticeship. The rules of Saint Louis constituted the chiefs of the trades the police of their corporation, and rendered them responsible for the disorders committed in their body.

The last and most numerous class of the nation was that which received the least advantages from these expeditions; nevertheless, the unfortunate serfs were not total strangers to their results. The Popes decided that no Christian, in whatever condition he might be born, could be prevented from taking up the Cross and departing for the Holy Land. This was to sever at one blow the ties which bound the serfs to the glebe or the land of their lord. It admitted them to a species of fraternity in arms, and displayed to their eyes the consoling sentiment of their individual dignity as members of the human family. But although these peasants, who had become soldiers of the Church, obtained their enfranchisement, the establishment of a free class of peasants did not follow as a result. Of that great multitude of men who left for Palestine, only a small number returned to their country; the greater part perished of misery,

The serfs.

cut down by the scimitars of the of fatigue, and of excess, or were Mussulmans. : Different and powerful causes,

The human mind, stimulated by of the Crusades ; and already, made notable progress during the period and attained great under Louis VI., the schools of Paris had of *scholastic phi-* Schools of Paris. celebritv. This was the first epoch of the University, and of the *losophy*,\* only taught from the chairs of the sect of the famous quarrels between the philosophers. The first only Schools of the Realists and of the Nominals. *Realists* and that of the *Nominals*. The *universaux*,

admitted reality in that which they called the and attached itself to the that is to say, *general ideas, collective beings*, the *universaux*, words, Platonic theories ; the second only saw in depended in preference names, simple abstractions of the mind, and as had for their chiefs on the theories of Aristotle. These two schools began to profess with two men of great renown. Roscelin de Combourg the *Nominals*, while brilliancy, in the twelfth century, the doctrine of was director of the his realistic adversary, Guillaume de Champeaux, then appeared the school of the cloister, Nôtre Dame, at Paris. for his Breton, Pierre Abellard, as much celebrated for by Abellard.

amours with Héloïse and by his own misfortunes, a physician, without a his science and his immortal genius. Profound logician, without a rival in dialectics, and of a marvellous eloquence, Abellard shone forth in the first ranks of the *Nominals*. His prodigious success did not shake his religious and Christian faith ; but upon them submit the Catholic dogmas to analysis, to comment, to logic, and reasonably. His principles upon different points of were open to the among others upon *Free Will*, appeared to be in opposition by decisions of the councils, and for the first time he was compelled to obtain the Council of Soissons for having taught without previous retired ing the approbation of the Pope and of the Church. Abellard retired into the solitary, sandy district of Champagne, where he raised with his own hands an oratory, composed of thatch and rushes which afterwards became the celebrated Abbey of *Paraclet*. His disciples, and among them the illustrious Arnold of Brescia, discovered his retreat ; they hurried from all parts ; they braved the austerities of the desert in order to follow their master, to hear his words, to pray and

\* The philosophy called *scholastic* was subordinate in all its affirmations to theology.

to meditate with him. Persecuted by his enemies, condemned afresh, Abeilard sought a more profound retreat in the Abbey of Saint-Gildas, in Brittany. Then, suddenly, braving his enemies, he reappeared brilliantly in Paris, where his renown drew together a number of students from all parts of Europe. His books flew from hand to hand; his doctrines spread themselves from the capital to the extremities of the kingdom, his glory was at its height, when a redoubtable antagonist crushed him under the thunderbolts of the irritated Church. This was Saint Bernard, founder of the celebrated Abbey of *Clairvaux*. This illustrious man pushed the monasterial austerities to an almost unheard-of rigour, living a life more ecstatic than terrestrial. Bearing in a body weak, pale, reduced by watchings and fastings, an inconceivable vigour of soul, leaning his words and his acts on the authority that gives the conviction of a holy mission and a supernatural inspiration, no one exercised more power over his contemporaries in an age when the faith of the people was so strong and their reason so weak. The Pope, the emperor, the kings, the bishops, the people, submitted to the authority of his genius; at one time he extinguished a schism, or drew up in the solitude of his cell the constitution of a religious order; at another, disposing at his pleasure of the sword of kings, he directed their armies to the east or the south, according to the interests of the Church. *His word*, they said, *was as a law*, which went forth out of his mouth, and everywhere there were reports of the marvellous cures which followed his steps. The same man taxed with pride the reason which attempted to explain the mysteries; he was irritated with the efforts of Abeilard to unravel inexplicable dogmas, and cried out in the bitterness of his soul, "They would search even into the entrails, the secrets of God." A new council assembled at Sens, and the two great adversaries met there in presence of the King, the princes, and the bishops. But Abeilard foresaw, without doubt, that the discussion would not be free; he declined the solemn debate, making an appeal to the Pope as he retired from it, and was condemned to seclusion in a convent to the end of his days. Then, bending his head, he confessed himself vanquished; and concealed his life in the monastery of Cluny; he closed it in 1142, in the priory near to Chalons, where he died, reconciled with Saint Bernard. He had had to combat with a far

Struggle between  
Abailard and  
Saint Bernard.

more redoubtable adversary than that great man. Abeilard struggled all his life against the dominant spirit of his age, which regarded every attempt made by human reason to attain at independence as a culpable insurrection. The genius which had animated him survived him, but many years passed away before any part of Europe dared to proclaim and admit the principle of which Abeilard could not assure the triumph—the liberty of examination and discussion in matters of conscience and of faith.

Already, however, the secrets of nature were studied, but the darkness was as yet too profound to permit the human mind to attain its aim. The study of mathematics became <sup>Science.</sup> that of astrology. Medicine degenerated into sorcery, and natural philosophy into alchemy. Nevertheless, in the midst of these gropings in the dark, science made some important discoveries: the alchemists, who endeavoured obstinately to find the *grand œuvre*, or the philosopher's stone, discovered by chance various properties of the bodies submitted to analysis, and the world was enriched by these discoveries, which they looked upon as nothing. It is thus that distillation was brought to light, the fabrication of acids, salts, convex lenses, and lastly, gunpowder, the composition of which was discovered by the monk, Roger Bacon, towards the close of the thirteenth century.

Finally, many sciences are indebted to the Crusades for great progress, among others the military art, navigation, history, and geography. The aspect of so many different countries, the observation of new and varied manners, and the comparison of a multitude of customs, extended the ideas of the people, and uprooted a great number of errors and prejudices. Nevertheless, a great part of the ameliorations of which the Crusades were the cause only manifested themselves very slowly, while others did not bear their fruit until long after Europe had given up these religious expeditions. The Crusades were also accompanied and followed by a great number of calamities, and it is necessary to recognize one of their most mournful results in the sanguinary ardour which they appear to have communicated to the Christians, a disposition entirely contrary to that of the Divine founder of their religion. The Christian people for a long time back, it is true, regarded as accursed of God all those who did not belong to their faith; the Crusades strengthened this fatal tendency of their

minds. People who were reputed heretics were soon persecuted with as much fury as the Mussulmans and Jews, and the extermination of the Albigenses opened the field for a long series of cruel wars. The weakness of the progress of Christianity in the East, and several of the disasters among the Christians in Palestine, ought to be in great part attributed to the barbarities of the Crusaders, who believed themselves entitled to act as they pleased towards infidels, and did not consider themselves bound to keep their word with them. They forgot that the best proof that men can give of the superiority of their civilization and of the sanctity of their religion is the respect that they show for virtue and truth.



## BOOK VI.

FROM THE DEATH OF ST. LOUIS TO THAT OF  
CHARLES VI.

DESPOTISM OF THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT AND AUTHORITY OF THE LEGISTS.  
—ACCESSION OF THE VALOIS TO THE THRONE.—HUNDRED YEARS'  
WAR WITH ENGLAND.—THE CELEBRATED STATES-GENERAL.—  
DISASTERS IN FRANCE.—GREAT SCHISM OF THE EAST.—ANARCHY.  
1270-1422.

## CHAPTER I.

REIGNS OF THE SUCCESSORS OF SAINT LOUIS, UNTIL THE ACCESSION OF THE  
VALOIS.—PHILIP III.—PHILIP IV.—LOUIS X.—PHILIP V.—CHARLES IV.  
1270-1328.

## PHILIP III.

THE third son of Saint Louis, Philip III., called without any known reason Philip the Bold, did not follow the glorious example of his father; he reigned surrounded by valets, and wholly given up to superstitious practices.

The same day that Saint Louis died he received Charles d'Anjou, his uncle, who entered into the port of Carthage with a fleet and an army. Notwithstanding this reinforcement, the Crusaders rested in inaction, rightly accusing Charles d'Anjou of having directed his brother to Tunis in his own interest, so that he might force the Moorish king to pay to him the tribute which ancient Neapolitan treaties imposed upon him. Peace was concluded that year; a large sum of money was handed over by the African prince, and all the prisoners given up. Then the army returned to Europe, diminished to one-half by the heat, the fatigue, and the plague. In sight of the

coast of Sicily, a tempest swallowed up eighteen French vessels, together with all the rich tribute paid by the King of Tunis. The Crusaders saw in this disaster the hand of God, which chastised them for having returned without visiting the Holy Land. Philip re-entered France preceded by five coffins, those of his father, his wife, his son, his brother, the Count of Nivers, and of his brother-in-law, Thibaut II., Count of Champagne, King of Navarre. His uncle Alphonso\* died shortly afterwards without offspring, and his death made Philip

Aggrandizement  
of the Royal  
Domain.

heir to the county of Toulouse, which, notwithstanding all the disasters of the war with the Albigenes, was still the most considerable fief in France. It comprised, together with ancient Languedoc, the Marquisate of Provence, or county of Venaissin, the county of Poitiers, the land of Auvergne, the Aunis, and a part of the Saintonge. Gregory X., one of the most venerable men that ever occupied the Pontifical throne, was elected Pope. Philip ceded to him the county of Venaissin, to which he himself had only doubtful rights, and engaged himself in wars of succession. Alphonso X., King of Léon and Castille, was dead, without having been able to cause his grandsons to be recognized as his successors; they were the children of Ferdinand of Cerda, and Blanche, the daughter of Saint Louis. Philip II. appealed in vain concerning their rights to the throne of their grandfather. The *Cortes*† of Segovia had designed as the successor of Alphonso, Sancho, his second son, already celebrated for his warlike talents; their decision overthrew all the principles of legitimacy.

Cession of the  
county of Venaissin  
to the Pope,  
1274.

Disgrace and  
execution of  
Pierre de la  
Brosse, 1273.

A thick cloud conceals from us the particular actions of Philip III.; he appeared to see and to act only through Pierre de la Brosse, who had been his chamberlain, and who, raised by base intrigues to the post of prime minister, had drawn upon himself the hate of all the court. A bloody catastrophe terminated the days of that favourite. Jealous of the influence of the Queen, Marie de Brabant, second wife of the King, he had accused her of the death of Prince Louis, eldest son of his first wife: Philip

\* Alphonso, brother of Saint Louis, had married Jeanne, daughter and heiress of Raymond VII., last Count of Toulouse.

† *Cortes*. The national assemblies of Spain were so called.

ordered inquiries to be made on the subject. At that time they believed that they could not find out the authors of a crime except by the torture of the accused, or by the intervention of the celestial and infernal powers. Philip consulted those persons whom the superstition of the time looked upon as being endowed with the power of reading the future. The *Vidame* of the Church of Laon, a Sarabaité,\* and a nun of Nivelles, were considered to have revelations. All three at once began to give credence to the reports spread about against the Queen; but afterwards they retracted, and advised the King to beware of Pierre de la Brosse. Two years passed away, when one day a monk brought to the King at Milan letters sealed with the seal of his minister. The contents of these letters remain a mystery; but La Brosse was arrested immediately and thrown into prison. Philip appointed as his judges three of the greatest nobles in his court, his enemies; and La Brosse was condemned, and hanged at the gibbet of Montfaucon in 1278.

The reign of Philip III. left no glorious souvenir for France, either in the interior of the kingdom or in foreign lands and this period was marked by the frightful disaster which overthrew the French Government in Sicily. Charles d'Anjou, after having deposed his rival, the young Conradin, son of Conrad IV. and grandson of Frederic II., to be condemned to death and executed, believed himself securely seated upon his new throne. Conradin was the last prince of the house of Hohenstaufen; his death left the field clear for Charles d'Anjou, who from that time believed that he could oppress Naples and Sicily under a frightful tyranny.

Vengeance brooded in every heart; John of Procida became the soul of the conspiracy: he was certain of the assistance of the Greek Emperor, Michael Paleologus, and of the King of Aragon, Don Pedro III. The latter assembled together a fleet, which he entrusted to the celebrated Roger of Loria, his admiral, with the order to await events upon the coast of Africa. Suddenly, on the 30th of March, 1282, the people of Palermo arose at the moment when the vesper bells sounded. At the stroke of

The Sicilian  
Vespers, 1282.

\* Monks who did not live in community and did not submit themselves to any rule were so called; they, however, wore the tonsure and gave themselves out as rigorists. (Du Cange: Glossary.)

this tocsin, the French were massacred in the streets of Palermo, and in a month afterwards the same thing had occurred throughout the whole of Sicily. Charles d'Anjou, furious, attacked Messina; Roger of Loria came forward and destroyed his fleet under his very eyes. Charles gave vent to cries of rage, and demanded vengeance from King Philip, his nephew. The Pontiff, Martin IV., sustained his cause with ardour; he declared Don Pedro deprived of the crown of Aragon, in order to punish him for having assisted the Sicilians, and by the same bull he named Charles de Valois, second son of Philip, successor to Don Pedro, against whom he preached a crusade. Philip III. commanded the expedition, but it was unfortunate: Gironne opposed a long resistance to France, while the King of Aragon, with his faithful Almogavares,\* half savage soldiers, held the neighbouring mountains. His unexpected and multiplied attacks, together with dearth and fever, mowed down the army of Philip; he returned to France ill and almost alone, carried on a litter, and expired in the course of the year. Charles d'Anjou died shortly before him, through disappointment at having lost Sicily; and Martin IV. and the King of Aragon followed Philip closely to the grave.

Crusade of the  
French into  
Aragon.

Death of  
Philip III., 1284.

Foundation of  
the imperial  
house of Haps-  
burg, 1273.

During this reign, a simple gentleman, called Rodolph, Count of Hapsburg, was elected Emperor in 1273, and became the founder of the new house of Austria. One of the most remarkable events of this period was the sudden rounion of the Greek and Roman Churches, effected by Gregory X. in 1274, at the second General Council of Lyons. The Emperor, Michael Palæologus, was received by the Pope into the number of the faithful; but the Greeks did not lend themselves to this reconciliation, which nearly cost the Emperor his life.

#### PHILIP IV.

1284-1314.

Accession of  
Philip IV., 1284.

PHILIP IV., surnamed the Fair, was sixteen years of age when he succeeded to the throne of Philip the Bold,

\* This name, borrowed from the Arabs, was applied in Catalonia to light infantry soldiers.

his father. His extreme youth did not offer an occasion for any trouble; and such was the progress of the monarchical spirit in France, that the nobles of the kingdom, instead of claiming to be either his equals or masters, assembled round him as his servants. Philip at once continued the war against Aragon, which his brother had commenced, and which was prolonged for many years without any decisive success. It was terminated by the Treaty of *Tarascon*, signed in 1291, and confirmed by that of *Aragon*. These treaties recognized Alphonso III., son of Pedro III., King of Aragon, and Charles II., son of Charles d'Anjou, King of Naples. The new house of Anjou was thus firmly established in the possession of this beautiful kingdom, from which, however, Sicily was detached and given up to the sovereigns of *Aragon*. Charles II., crowned by the Pope, ceded his hereditary domains, Maine and Anjou, to Charles de Valois, second son of Philip the Bold.

War with  
Aragon.

Treaties of  
Tarascon and of  
Aragon, 1291.

The first ordinances of the new King were favourable to the bourgeoisie and the Jews; but Philip, whose character was hard, irascible, and rapacious, put no curb on his pride and cupidity. He oppressed his subjects without pity, and in his exactions was supported by unprincipled men of law, notorious for their skill in the art of chicanery, as well as for their base servility. These legists, judges, councillors, and royal officers, were under him, the tyrants of France; their work, however, in so far as it touched legislation, had a useful influence which cannot be forgotten. Imbued with the ideas of the Roman imperial law, they proceeded with an impassible perseverance to introduce it into the French political law by joining together the privileges of the sovereignty in the sole hands of the prince, and by the equality of the subjects before the law. In civil law they played the same part; the *Pandects* always before them, they tried to introduce the same spirit of reason and of natural equity which had inspired the great jurisconsults of the empire. In this manner they demolished the social order, as it had been created under the feudal system, organized at the same time monarchical centralization, and became the true founders of the civil order in modern times.

Authority of  
the legists.

The court of the King, or Parliament, the supreme tribunal of the

Parliament of  
Paris, 1302.

kingdom, became the seat of their power. This body, founded by Saint Louis with the political and judicial privileges of the time, was modified by Philip IV.; the judicial element at this period alone was preserved.\* The Parliament in the meantime ceased to be itinerant. An ordinance of the 23rd of March, 1302, fixed it in Paris, and established it in the Cité, at the ancient palace of the kings, which took from that time the name of the Palace of Justice. It was composed of clerks and jurisconsults, all persons of the Third Estate, and it became the focus of the anti-feudal revolution.

In order to sustain this new form of government, to make it respected, and to execute the judgments of the men of law, it was necessary to have an imposing force. The King had to pay a judicial and administrative army, and the maintenance of the horse and foot sergeants alone cost large sums, and it was necessary to wrest this money by violence from the unfortunate population. Thence sprang the despotism, thence the cruel miseries, which held in suspense for so long a time the advantages of the central and monarchical power, and the barbarous rule established by the feudal government.

No prince employed more iniquitous and odious means of increasing his treasury than Philip the Fair. History recounts a thousand instances of his violent and cruel extortions. The revenues of most of the provinces were pledged to two Italian brothers, rich bankers, for the price of supplies which they had furnished to the King. He, in order to settle with them, caused all the Italian bankers and traders to be arrested on the same day, under the pretext of usurious traffic, and compelled them to redeem themselves from torture at an enormous sum. He renewed this execrable expedient of the French, and the tribunals, were the accomplices of his hateful violence.

This king, far from warlike, saw without emotion the disasters among the Christians, and the capture of Saint Jean d'Acre, their last stronghold in Palestine. He had obtained from the Pope the permission to levy tithes upon the clergy for the purpose of undertaking a crusade; but this impost only profited himself, and he alone reaped

\* It was not so in the course of time; and a century later, the Parliament recovered by union with the Court of Peers its political privileges.

the produce. The successes of Edward I., King of England, troubled him more. That prince, at the death of Alexander III., King of Scotland, caused himself to be recognized as arbiter between the aspirants to the throne, and had awarded it <sup>Troubles in Scotland.</sup> to John Baliol, whose weakness he knew. He threatened to invade that kingdom, when Philip caused him to be summoned before the Parliament of Paris as his vassal for Aquitaine. Peace had reigned for thirty-five years between the two crowns, and Philip, in summoning his powerful rival to appear, alleged as a pretext certain troubles caused by the rivalry of commerce between the two nations. Edward, indignant, stirred up as enemies to France, Adolph of Nassau, King of the Romans,\* and Count de Dampierre, Count of Flanders. But Philip seized the daughter of that count by treachery, and held her as a hostage, while a French <sup>War in Guienne.</sup> army invaded Guienne, of which Philip the Fair took possession. He pledged himself, on the other side, to King Baliol to take up arms, and support the celebrated Scotchman, William Wallace, against the English monarch.

He afterwards formed an alliance with the revolted Flemings, and excited Albert of Austria, son of Rodolph of Hapsburg, to take up arms against Adolph of Nassau. Many of the electors of the empire supported him. Adolph of Nassau was slain, or perhaps assassinated, in a battle; Albert of Austria succeeded him in the empire, and defended the interests of France. Philip the Fair displayed remarkable talent in all these negotiations. Edward, pressed on all sides, proposed to Philip to submit their differences to the decision of Pope Boniface VIII. That Pontiff was, in some respects, indebted for his tiara to the King of France, who accepted him as <sup>Boniface VIII. Arbitrator between Edward I. and Philip IV., 1296.</sup> arbiter. Boniface pronounced in his favour, and only ordered the restitution of a part of the lands confiscated

under Edward. He imposed a long truce between the two kings, and united their interests by means of marriages. The King of England abandoned the Count of Flanders, and Philip no longer defended Scotland, which Edward seized for the second time. The French monarch then, with flattering promises, invited the Count of Flanders to place himself at his discretion. That unfortunate nobleman gave

\* The term "King of the Romans" was applied to the chief elected for the empire of Germany before his coronation by the Pope.

himself up with confidence to the King. He was immediately thrown into prison, and all his states were seized by Philip, who gave to the Flemings Jacques de Châtillon for a governor.

Confiscation of  
Flanders.

The French gentlemen despised the bourgeois of that industrious country, and believed that they had the right to despoil them. The tyranny which they exercised excited the people of Flanders to revolt. The trades corporations assembled together, massacred the French in Bruges, and in the other towns, restoring independence to their country. The Flemish militia occupied Courtray, in front of which town the French army

Revolt of the  
Flemings, 1301.  
War in Flanders.

Battle of Cour-  
tray. Sanguinary  
defeat of the  
French, 1302.

was encamped. They went out to meet it, and waited bravely for the battle. The Flemings attended mass and took the sacrament together. The knights who were with them embraced the chief of the trades. They gave no quarter to the French, and repeated that Châtillon was coming with casks full of cords to hang them with. The Constable, Raoul de Nesle, proposed to turn the flank of the Flemings by cutting them off from Courtray; but the cousin of the King, Robert d'Artois, was indignant at this prudent counsel, and asked him if he was afraid of the Flemings, or whether he had an understanding with them. The Constable, son-in-law of the Count of Flanders, answered haughtily—"Sir, if you come where I shall go, you will be well in front," and then rushed forward blindly at the head of his cavalry. Each one wished to follow him, those behind pressing those before. On approaching the Flemish army they found a ditch five fathoms deep, into which they fell huddled together, and pierced through by the stakes of the enemy. In that spot was interred the flower of the chivalry of France—Artois, Châtillon, Nesle, Aumale, Dammartin, Dreux, Tancarville, and a crowd of others. The Flemings had only the trouble of killing them—smashing in the heads of the conquered with iron mallets. This defeat weakened the feudal power in France, and strengthened royalty.

Philip resolved to avenge in person the affronts on his nobility at Courtray. He entered Flanders at the head of a powerful army, and occupied Tournay. His fleet, united with a Genoese squadron, overcame the Flemings at Zeriksee, and his knights achieved a brilliant victory at Mons-en-Puelle, where six thousand of the bourgeois of Flanders were left upon the field of battle. But when he believed that these people

Victories of the  
French at  
Zeriksee, and at  
Mons-en-Puelle.  
Treaty of peace,  
1304.



were subdued, he saw with surprise a new Flemish army, sixteen thousand strong, appear under the walls of Lille, which he was besieging. These were the brave bourgeois of Ghent, of Bruges, of Ypres, and of other towns in Flanders, who had bound themselves by an oath never to see their hearths again until they had obtained an honourable peace or victory. "Better," said they, "to die in battle than live in servitude." Defied in his camp by this formidable army, the King listened to the prudent counsel and advice of his generals. He signed a treaty by which the Flemings gave up to him French Flanders, as far as the Lys, with the towns of Lille and Douai. Philip set at liberty the new Count of Flanders, Robert de Béthune, son of Guy de Dampierre, and recognized the independence of the Flemings.

Reunion of Lille and Douai with France.

The pride of the King had been already deeply wounded by the haughty Boniface VIII., who had shown that he was his rival in ambition, violence, and cupidity. Founding his power partly on his wealth, he had, at the expiration of the thirteenth century, again established the *Ordinary Jubilee*, promising entire remission of sins to every one who visited, during thirty consecutive days, all the churches of Rome. An enormous multitude of pilgrims hurried to place their rich offerings at the feet of the Pontiff. Boniface then extended his hand over all the sceptres: he wished to sell Sicily to Charles II., King of Naples; he called to justice Albert of Austria for the murder of Adolph of Nassau; protected the children of La Cerda in Castile; claimed to interpose between England and Scotland, issued a bull against the King of Hungary, and supported the Bishop of Pamiers, his legate, against the implacable vengeance of Philip the Fair, whom that monarch had insulted.

Struggle between Boniface VIII. and Philip the Fair.

Philip had already, on his own authority, levied tithes upon the clergy, and often abused the *royal right*; \* irritated by the pretensions of the Pope and the reproaches of the bishop, he caused those of his men of law who were most devoted to his will to obtain an

\* This *royal right* was one of the causes of frequent quarrels, which took place at different epochs between the court of France and that of Rome. It was the right bestowed on the King by the Gallican Church to receive the revenues of the bishoprics and abbeys during the vacancy of the sees.

accusation against the latter—and in the number of these it is necessary to cite Pierre Flotte, his chancellor; Enguerrand de Marigny, his confidant; Guillaume de Plaisians, and Guillaume de Nogaret. These men, always skilful in finding guilty those whom the King wished to strike, soon discovered charges against the Bishop of Pamiers sufficient to give a motive for his arrest. Philip ordered it for the crime of *lèse-majesté*, or high treason against the King, and demanded his degradation from the Archbishop of Narbonne, his metropolitan. But Boniface, indignant that the archers of the King should lay hands on a bishop, revoked the judgment, and warned the King of his wrong doings in the bull *Ausculda, fili* (Listen, O my son);

Bull, *Ausculda, fili.* where these words may be read:—"Do you think, then, O my son, that you have not a superior, and that you must not submit yourself to the supreme hierarchy? We cannot conceal from you that you disquiet us, that you oppress your subjects, both those in the churches and ecclesiastical persons generally, the peers, counts, and barons, also the universities, and that you scandalize the multitude. . . . We have warned you, and far from correcting your errors, we see that your hate has only increased," &c. Philip, excited to fury, supported by the University of Paris, caused the Pope's bull to be burned, and convoked the first States-General where the deputies of the *common people*\* had been sum-

\* For several centuries the great assemblies of all the freemen, the *malls*, had ceased. Already, at the end of the Merovingian dynasty, the *Champs de Mars* were almost out of use. Pepin, carried to the throne by a Germanic movement, reinstated with vigour the ancient customs, and the nation was often convoked, no longer at the *Champs de Mars*, on account of the severity of the weather, but at the *Champs de Mai*. Although these assemblies still bore the name of *placites généraux* of the Franks, the nobles alone participated in the business. Under Charlemagne these assemblies became regular, and were only composed of *majors* and *minors* (see the reign of Charlemagne); the people were only spectators. The successors of the great Emperor preserved this custom, and it existed until nearly the end of the Carolingian dynasty, of synods, of plenary courts, and of parliaments held in the name of the people, where the people were never represented. This was one of the assemblies which decreed the crown to Hugh Capet. Under the third race the assemblies continued to be composed of barons and feudal prelates. Philip the Fair was the first of the Capets who recognized the right of suffrage belonging to the Third Estate; still, this right, even as late as the fifteenth century, only belonged to walled towns, or *bonnes villes*. Otherwise there was nothing fixed, either concerning the forms of the convocations, or upon the mode of the elections, not only for the Third Estate, but also for the two other orders; and this uncertainty continued almost till 1788. No law, no ordinance, had regulated these forms. For a

moned alongside the barons and bishops. The mayors, aldermen, jurats, consuls of the *bonnes villes*, hurried to Paris, and took their places in Notre Dame, where, on the 10th of April, 1302, the first sitting was opened. The King assisted in person, and, after having made known to the assembly the pontifical bulls, a letter of remonstrance addressed to the court of Rome was obtained from each order. In it, the nobility, the clergy, and the Third Estate proclaimed the complete independence of the crown. Boniface avenged himself by excommunicating the King; and the two rivals prepared themselves for an obstinate struggle by reconciling themselves with their enemies, and sacrificing every other interest to that of their hate. The Pope allied himself with Albert of Austria, and Philip restored Guienne in fief to Edward. Strengthened by the support of the States-General, which he convoked for a second time at the Louvre, Philip wished to strike a great blow. His representative, William de Nogaret, betook himself to Anagni, where the Pope resided, and made himself master of his person; Sciarra Colonna, a Roman gentleman who accompanied Nogaret, struck the old man with his iron gauntlet. However, Boniface astonished his enemies by his courage. "Behold my neck—behold my head!" said he to them; "betrayed like Jesus Christ, and ready to die, at least I will die Pope!" Freed by the people of Anagni, he expired at Rome, a month afterwards, of a fever caused by the shock, and by anger, at the age of eighty-six years.

First States-General of the three orders, 1302.

Boniface VIII. outraged by Nogaret. His death, 1303.

Arbiter of the election, in consequence of his influence with the French cardinals, after the death of Benedict XI., in 1305, Philip promised to the Cardinal Bertrand de Goth, his enemy in old times, to cause him to be elected Pope if he engaged to hand over to him for five years tithes on the members of the clergy, to render to Philip an important service, which he would claim and name at the proper time, and, lastly, to stain the memory of Boniface VIII. This bargain, which the people called the *Diabolical Bargain*, was, it is said, concluded in a forest of Saintonge, near Saint Jean d'Angély. Bertrand de Goth accepted the terms, consented to all, placed himself

profound research into this subject the reader is referred to the *Histoire des Etats généraux de France*, by M. E. Rathery.

under the discretion of the King in the county Venaissin, where he was the first to establish the residence of the Holy See,\* and became Pope under the name of Clement V. He did not leave France before he had kept all his promises. The service which Philip had exacted without naming it beforehand was the suppression of the Order of the Templars. Their power wounded the pride of the monarch, while their immense wealth tempted his cupidity. Before they had any suspicion of his design, he caused all those in his kingdom to be seized and thrown into dungeons. Then commenced a frightful prosecution against them, where torture furnished the evidence; and where the men of law won over by Philip filled the places of judges. The King confiscated the property of his victims, while, at the same time, he stained their characters with horrible imputations without legal proofs. The Templars perished by the sword, by hunger, and by fire, retracting in the face of execution the confessions which torture had torn from them. Jacques Molay, their Grand Master, rendered himself illustrious by his courage; he protested his innocence in the middle of the flames, and it is said that he summoned both the monarch and the Pontiff to appear before God during the year.

Philip was then the most powerful king in Europe. He invited all the sovereigns to follow his example; Edward II., King of England, and Charles II., King of Naples, acceded to his wishes, and seized upon the Templars in their states: fifteen thousand families were broken up by this terrible measure.

Philip IV., dishonoured among the people by the surname of the False Coiner, continued his hateful and vexatious acts; he levied enormous taxes, and debased the coinage, and,

\* At first this was at Carpentras, the capital of the county Venaissin, gained by Gregory X., and at which Clement V. established himself in 1308. Avignon did not form a part of this county—indeed did not belong, at this period, to the Holy See. This town, where the Popes had already resided for many years, was sold, in 1348, by Clement VI. to the Countess of Provence, Jeanne de Naples, and her successors remained there till 1377. Notwithstanding their return to Rome, and without excluding some temporary occupations, particularly under Louis XIV., the county Venaissin never ceased to belong to the Holy See until the legislative assembly, in 1791, declared its union, together with that of Avignon, with France, thus forming the department of Vaucluse.

after the money was issued, he refused to receive it again thus altered by himself. In one day he caused all the Jews in his kingdom to be imprisoned, and despoiled them of their wealth. He was the most absolute despot who had reigned in France; yet he was the first of his race who granted a representative privilege to the communes. He showed a sort of favour to the bourgeois, consulting their deputies more freely than those of the nobility.

He knew that men elevated from a low degree, gratified <sup>His policy.</sup> with their prominent position, would offer little resistance; and it was from among obscure men that he selected his favourites and ministers, of whom the most celebrated was Enguerrand de Marigny. He wanted support in order to sustain him in his perfidious and cruel measures, and, in summoning the bourgeois to the councils of the kingdom, he felt strong enough to fear nothing from a liberty which was only so, in name; torture was used profusely, and the whole nation was ruled by terror. Towards the close of his days he exercised severities upon his own family: the wives of his three sons were accused, at the same time, of adultery; he threw them into prison, and caused those whom he suspected to be their lovers to be flayed alive. He expired shortly afterwards, recommending to his son piety, clemency, and justice. <sup>His death, 1314.</sup>

Clement V., his accomplice, died shortly afterwards; while Henry VII. had expired in the preceding year.

Under Philip the Fair the domain of the crown was increased by La Marche and Angoumois, which he confiscated; by Lyonnais, which he detached from the empire; and a part <sup>Acquisitions of the crown under Philip IV.</sup> of French Flanders. He had married Jeanne, heiress of the kingdom of Navarre, of the county of Champagne, and of Brie. The results of that union were favourable to France.

The reign of Philip is one of the most gloomy in the history of France. At this period—from towards the end of the thirteenth century till the commencement of the fourteenth—the French lived beneath a yoke of iron; and, notwithstanding the heroism displayed two hundred years before in the communal revolutions, they were in general strangers to the spirit of independence which agitated most of the countries around them, and to which Italy and Flanders owed their arts and their industry. Robert Bruce in Scotland, and William Tell

in Switzerland, had restored freedom to their countries. Still, the great events which then shook some states were caused much less by the spirit of individual liberty than by the love of national independence; and the greater part of the people of Europe, after constituting themselves nations, fell again under a yoke as hard as that which they had shaken off.

## LOUIS X.

PHILIP left three sons and one daughter. Louis X., the eldest, surnamed *Le Hutin*,\* in consequence of his vicious tastes, was twenty-five years of age at the death of his father, and had already worn for fifteen years the crown of Navarre, which he had inherited from his mother, together with that of Champagne and Brie. His two brothers, Philip and Charles, like himself, were given up to vicious habits, and their sister Isabella, wife of Edward II., only distinguished herself by crime and infamy.

Philip the Fair, as a matter of policy, had entrusted the great offices of the state to obscure men, who owed all they possessed to his favour. His family censured this system, and one of the first acts of Louis was to arrest and bring to judgment the Chancellor Pierre Latelli, who was pardoned, and Enguerrand, de Marigny, prime minister of the late King. Charles de Valois, uncle of the monarch, begged that sentence of death should be passed on Marigny, in consequence of a personal injury. This minister, who was held responsible for all the tyrannical acts of his master, and accused of sorcery, was condemned, and hanged at the gibbet of Montfaucon. Marguerite of Burgundy, wife of the King, was shut up in the Château Gaillard des Andelys, on a charge of adultery. Louis caused her to be strangled, and afterwards married Clemence of Hungary. He always lived surrounded by prodigal young noblemen, whom he made the companions of his pleasures; and the nobility, taking advantage of their influence, obtained from him the right to be restored in possession of their ancient privileges. He thus weakened the mainspring of the monarchy, so anxiously cared for by his father. The

Accession of Louis X., 1314.  
Trial and execution of Marigny, 1315.

feeb- ent of  
a roya power.

\* An old French word, long out of use.

judicial combat was re-established; confederations of the nobles were formed in most parts of the provinces, and each obtained a charter, and the nobles of the north recovered their royal rights. But the King, pressed by want of money, issued also some decrees favourable to the national liberties, offering to the peasants of the crown, and to the serfs held in mortmain, to sell them their liberty; but he gave no guarantee of the rights that he recognized, and such was the misery of the people, and such the distrust that the King inspired, that his decree was only received by a small number, and brought little money into the treasury. Great disorder in the financial department, and the horrors of a famine, accompanied by astounding scandals, marked the rapid course of this reign. Then might be seen the clergy themselves conducting in the provinces processions of penitents, entirely naked, for the purpose of obtaining from Heaven favourable weather for the harvests. Louis X. died in 1316, in consequence of an imprudence, leaving his wife, Clemence of Hungary, *enceinte*. By his first marriage he had only one daughter, called Jeanne, then six years old.

## PHILIP V.

PHILIP V., called the Long, brother of Louis le Hutin, took possession of the regency, to the prejudice of the Queen, who gave birth to a son, named John. This child only survived a few days, and Philip, uncle of the Princess Jeanne, already in possession of the royal authority, caused it to be decreed by the States-General, and by the University of France, that the law of succession established among the ancient Franks for the Salic land,\* should be applied to the crown of France, and that, in virtue of that law, women should never inherit the throne. This was the first application of that celebrated law.

Accession of  
Philip V., 1316.

The Salic law.

The new King felt the want of being supported by the legists, and showed towards them an altogether special favour. He bestowed attention on the administration of the interior, appointed the captains-general of the provinces and the captains of the towns, and organized the militia of the communes, decreeing, however, that the arms

\* See page 27.

should remain deposited in the houses of the captains till there was a necessity for their use. Save a rapid and useless expedition into Italy, he had no interior or exterior war to sustain, and yet blood streamed in France under his reign. A new religious fury seized the shepherds and inhabitants of the plains, designated under the name of

*Pastoureaux.* They met together in crowds, with the intention of passing into the Holy Land and setting free the Holy Sepulchre. From mendicants, however, they turned into plunderers, and it became necessary to punish them. They offered in a holocaust to God all the Jews that they met, and, after having committed a multitude of highway robberies and murders, they were nearly all massacred and destroyed by the Seneschal of

Carcassonne. A horrible proscription included those attacked with leprosy, during the same reign; they were accused of having poisoned the wells of drinking water throughout the kingdom, Philip V. and Pope John XXII. both believed in magic, they gave credence to the crime of the lepers without any proof except that forced out by horrible tortures. From that time all those who were attacked by skin disease were arrested and accused of sorcery; and as such, they were forbidden to have recourse to the tribunals of the kingdom. The Jews, suspected of being in complicity with them, perished in the same torments. In the midst of these atrocious executions the King fell ill of a wasting disease. The relics from the Sainte-Chapelle, which they brought him, and which he kissed devoutly, could not revive him: he died at Longchamp, in 1322.

Most of the ordinances of Philip V. are remarkable for the continual confusion of the personal interests of the King with those of the kingdom, and for the desire to regulate the use of the sovereign will without at the same time recognizing any limit to it. By a decree of 1318, the King ordered himself to attend mass every morning, and regulated the manner of making his bed; by another he denied to himself the right to transfer the domains of the crown, and revoked all the gifts of his father. This prince gave letters of nobility to persons of mean origin. At last these letters were sold for money, and this innovation, in renewing the aristocracy, altered its character and weakened it. Amongst the

Persecution of  
the lepers and of  
the Jews.

Death of Philip  
V., 1322.

Letters of  
nobility.



numerous edicts of Philip V., those which organized the militia, the chambers of exchequer, the administration of the woods and forests, and the office of the collectors, indicate the progress of order, and the substitution of the despotism supported by law for the despotism sustained by the sword.

Useful edicts of this prince.

#### CHARLES IV., CALLED THE FAIR.

PHILIP V. had one son and four daughters when he asked the States to exclude, in perpetuity, daughters from the throne. A few months afterwards he lost his son, and was the first person wounded in his paternal love by the law which he had caused to be passed. His brother Charles inherited the sceptre; he was the third son of Philip the Fair, and was then twenty-eight years of age. He issued ordinances for the purpose of ameliorating the lot of the lepers and Jews; there are few things besides in his reign that history has handed down to us. The foundation of the Floral Games, at Toulouse, dates from this epoch.

Accession of Charles IV., 1322.

Floral Games.

While the civil war desolated England, Charles, at the instigation of his sister Isabella, wife of Edward II., usurped the rights of that prince in Aquitaine. The English monarch sent his son to him, in order to pay him homage; Charles held back the young prince at his court, as a hostage, and furnished soldiers and money to his sister in order to fight against her husband. That unfortunate king was made prisoner, and shortly afterwards a frightful death put an end to his days. Charles IV. fell ill at this period, and decreed that if the queen, then *enceinte*, should give birth to a son, his cousin-german, Philip of Valois, should be regent of the kingdom; if she gave birth to a daughter, his intention was that the twelve peers and the high barons of France should sit in parliament and decree the crown to whomsoever it belonged by law. He died on Christmas day, in the same year, carried off, like his brothers, in the vigour of his life. Thus appeared to be accomplished the judgment of God, with which the house of Philip the Fair had for a long time been threatened, in the eyes of the people, in punishment for its crimes.

IVth of Charles IV.

His death, 1327.

We have seen the successive enlargements of the royal domain

since the time of Philip I. It had acquired during these two centuries by conquest, by confiscation, or by inheritance, Berry, or the viscounty of Bourges, Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Poitou, Valois, Vermandois, the counties of Auvergne and Boulogne, a part of Champagne and Brie, Lyonnais, Angoumois, Marche, nearly the whole of Languedoc, and lastly, the kingdom of Navarre, which, belonging in her own right to Queen Jeanne, mother of the last three Capetians, Charles IV. united with the crown. But the custom among the kings of giving apanages or estates to the princes of their house detached afresh from the domain a great part of the reunited territories, and created powerful feudal princely houses, of which the chiefs often made themselves formidable to the monarchs. Among these great

Recapitulation of the acquisitions made by the royal domain, from the end of the eleventh century until the fourteenth century.

Princely feudal houses.

houses of the Capetian race, the most formidable were — the house of *Burgundy*, which traced back to King Robert; the house of *Dreux*, issue of a son of Louis the Big, and which added by a marriage the duchy of Brittany to the county of that name; the house of *Anjou*, issue of Charles, brother of Saint Louis, which was united, in 1290, with that of Valois; the house of *Bourbon*, descending from Robert, Count of Clermont, sixth son of Saint Louis; and the house of *Alençon*, which traced back to Philip III., and possessed the duchy of Alençon and Perche.

Besides these great princely houses of Capetian stock, which owed their grandeur and their origin to their apanages, there were

Other feudal houses.

many others which held considerable rank in France, and of which the possessions were transmissible to women; while the apanages were all masculine fiefs. The most powerful of these houses were those of Flanders, Penthièvre, Châtillon, Montmorency, Brienne, Coucy, Vendôme, Auvergne, Foix, and Armagnac. The vast possessions of the two last houses were in the country of the Langue d'Oc. The Counts of Foix were also masters of Béarn, and those of Armagnac possessed Fzensac, Rouergue, and other large seigniories.

Many foreign princes, besides, had possessions in France at the accession of the Valois. The King of England was lord of Ponthieu, of Aunis, of Saintonge, and of the duchy of Aquitaine; the King of Navarre was Count of Evreux,

Foreign princes in possession in France.

and possessor of many other towns in Normandy ; the King of Majorca was proprietor of the seigniorship of Montpellier ; the Duke of Lorraine, vassal of the German empire, paid homage to the King of France for many fiefs that he held in Champagne ; and, lastly, the Pope possessed the county Venaissin, detached from Provence.

## CHAPTER II.

## ACCESSION OF THE VALOIS.—REIGN OF PHILIP VI.

1327—1350.

WITH the new reign commenced a long series of disastrous wars between England and France. When the calamities to which they gave birth had transformed, in the eyes of the two nations, the particular rivalries of their kings to national rivalries, the French and the English persuaded themselves that they were natural enemies, and this prejudice existed, to the misfortune of humanity, for five centuries. Nevertheless, in the fourteenth century, the war only broke out between them, as in the preceding centuries, in the interest of their sovereigns, who both raised rival pretensions to the succession of Charles IV.

Jeanne d'Évreux, widow of that monarch, gave birth to a daughter, and, according to the will of the late King, the Parliament was summoned to decide between the candidates for the throne. The two principal were the Regent, Philip of Valois,\* grandson of Philip the Bold, and cousin-german of the last three kings of France; and

Edward III., King of England, son of Isabella, sister of those princes. The interpretation already twice given

Accession of the Valois. Philip VI., 1328.

during twelve years to the Salic law then received a third and last sanction. Women were declared to be deprived of all right to the crown, which the Parliament solemnly awarded to Philip of Valois. This decision was from that time recognized as a fundamental law of the state. Ideas of legality began to make their way into the spirit of the nation, and law was appealed to, supported by force; however, no constitution up to that time had fixed the rights of heirdom to the crown, and Philip, in his office of Regent, had exercised so great an influence on the jurisconsults, creatures of the kings and flatterers of power, that

The Salic law recognized as a fundamental law of the state.

\* Valois, a small tract of country in the Ile de France, had been given in apanage, with the title of count, to Charles, youngest son of Philip the Bold, and father of Philip of Valois.

Edward, in appealing himself to the law, would not recognize the authority of the men charged with its interpretation, and appealed from their decision to his sword. But many years rolled away before he declared war against Philip of Valois; and in the meantime he still paid him homage for the fiefs which he possessed in France.

Philip, Count d'Evreux,\* another grandson of Philip the Bold, and husband of Jeanne, daughter of Louis X., the eldest of the last three Capetians, was the third candidate for the crown. He received from the monarch the kingdom of Navarre, to which his wife had legitimate rights through her grandfather,† and which was also detached from the crown of France. But the royal domain, by the accession of Philip of Valois, gained the county of Valois, Maine, and Anjou; these latter provinces had been ceded by the house of Anjou to the house of Valois, under Philip IV.

The crown of France loses the kingdom of Navarre: it gains Valois, Maine, and Anjou.

Philip VI. was thirty-six years old when, in 1328, he was recognized as king. This prince was brave, violent, vindictive, and cruel; skilful in all muscular exercises, he was ignorant of the first notions of the military art and of financial administration. With him the art of reigning was to inspire terror by executions, and admiration by pomp and magnificence. The first acts of his reign were the alteration of the coinage and the judgment of death on Pierre Rémy, treasurer of finances under the previous reign. Philip VI. accused him of embezzlement: Rémy was executed, and the King took possession of his rich spoils. Soon after he marched into Flanders to the assistance of the ferocious Count Louis, who was always at war with his subjects; and the bloody battle of Cassel, where thirteen thousand Flemings were slaughtered, restored to the Count his states.

Execution of the treasurer, Pierre Rémy, 1327.

Battle of Cassel 1328.

The issue of a scandalous lawsuit caused the first germs of discord to spring up between Edward III. and Philip VI. Robert d'Artois, brother-in-law of Philip, had vainly bribed witnesses, in order to obtain from the King and Parliament that the county of Artois, adjudicated to his

Preliminaries of the Hundred Years War between England and France, 1351-1358.

\* The county of Evreux had been given in apanage, in 1307, by Philip the Fair to his brother Louis, younger son of Philip the Bold.

† See page 224.

aunt Mahaut, should be given up to him. Blinded by his fury, after having uselessly employed assassins, he had recourse to demons ; and the King, filled with the superstitious beliefs of that age, learned with fright that he, as well as his son, were *envoultés* (bewitched) by his brother-in-law. They then believed that if a little image of wax, representing any person, were baptized by a priest, and afterwards pierced with a needle in the place of the heart, the person whom the figure represented would suffer from the wound, and soon die. The demons were invoked in this magical operation, which was called "making a *voult* (a vow) against any one," or "*l'envoulter*." The King was no more exempt than his people from the fear which this superstitious belief inspired. Robert, pursued by his vengeance, found an asylum with Edward, and never desisted from urging him on to war.

That monarch was then recognized on the continent by most powerful allies. The cruelties of the Count of Flanders had again caused a revolt among his subjects. Ghent, the richest and most populous town of the Low Countries, had revolted, and placed itself under obedience to the celebrated brewer, Jacquemart Artevelt, who was the soul of a new league against Count Louis and France. Having need of the support of England, Artevelt, in the name of the Flemings, recognized Edward as the King of France. About the same time, the Emperor Louis IV. of Bavaria, irritated against Philip, who had refused homage for the fiefs which he held from the empire upon the left bank of the Rhine, declared solemnly at the Diet of Coblenz, held in 1336, that Philip was entirely deprived of all protection from the empire until he had restored his maternal inheritance to Edward. He also named the latter monarch his representative for all the lands on the left bank of the Rhine held by the imperial crown.

However, the chivalrous King John of Bohemia allied himself with Philip, and, loaded with wealth, seduced the German princes and the Emperor himself, and held neutrality during the terrible struggle about to take place between the Kings of France and England. He strove also to bring about an excommunication of the Flemings by Pope Benedict XII., but Edward submitted himself to the will of the Pontiff, threatening him with the fate of Boniface VIII.

Edward then took the title of King of France ; he entered Flanders

at the head of an army, and confirmed all the privileges of the Flemings. Philip sustained against him, with superior forces, a defensive warfare, refusing to engage in any general action. The English, nevertheless, took the French fleet by surprise, shut up in a narrow creek near Ecluse. They gave them battle, and obtained a complete victory. France lost ninety vessels and more than thirty thousand men. This battle was followed by an armistice between the two nations.

First hostilities,  
1338.

Battle of Ecluse,  
1340.

A bloody and fatal war to France broke out in the following year in Brittany. John III., duke of that province, had died without issue, and two rivals disputed his inheritance. The one was Charles de Blois, husband of one of his nieces and nephew of the King of France; the other, Montfort, conqueror of the Albigenes: he was the younger brother of the last duke, and had been disinherited by him. The Court of Peers, devoted to the King, adjudged the duchy to Charles de Blois, his nephew. Montfort immediately made himself master of the strongest places, and rendered homage for Brittany to King Edward, whose assistance he implored. This war, in which Charles de Blois was supported by France and Montfort by England, lasted for twenty-four years without interruption, and presented, in the midst of heroic actions, a long course of treacheries and atrocious robberies. Amongst the most famous combats of this terrible struggle history quotes, during a truce with England, *the Combat of the Thirty*, a bloody duel between thirty Bretons under Jean de Beaumanoir, and thirty English commanded by Bemborough. Victory remained with the Bretons; but it had no influence upon the issue of the war. Two women—two heroines—vied in courage at this time with the most celebrated warriors. They were Jeanno la Boiteuse, wife of Charles de Blois, and Jeanne la Flamande, wife of Montfort. They were the soul of their parties; and the defence of Honebon rendered Jeanne de Montfort immortal.

Commencement  
of the civil war in  
Brittany, 1341.

Combat of the  
Thirty.

Charles de Blois, nephew of Philip VI., only inherited on the female side the duchy of Brittany. The King sustained his cause for a family interest, and he had recourse to perfidy and cruelty. In a tournament, to which the Breton knights had repaired without mistrust, he caused

Perfidy and  
cruelty of Philip  
VI. in regard to  
the Breton nobles  
devoted to  
Montfort.

twelve of the party of Montfort to be arrested. Oliver Clisson, one of the most powerful nobles of Brittany, was of this number. All were beheaded, without legitimate cause and without a trial. The widow of Clisson immediately took by surprise a fortress belonging to the King, and caused the whole of the garrison to be slaughtered before her eyes. The parents and friends of the knights put to death by treachery all passed over to the side of Montfort, and called their enemies to their assistance. One of them, Geoffroy d'Harcourt, being threatened with the same fate by Philip, obtained from King Edward a vow to avenge them; and in the year following, an English army, commanded by Edward, and conducted by this same Harcourt, disembarked in Normandy, and ravaged the kingdom without obstacle, until they arrived beneath the walls of Paris.

Philip, appealing to all the nobility of France, assembled round him a formidable army, before which Edward retired. The retreat of the English was difficult; very inferior in numbers to the French, they passed over the Somme at the ford of Blanquetaque, and, compelled to fight, they fortified themselves upon a hill which commanded the village of *Cressy*, and there placed cannons, which were then for the first time used in European armies.

First employment of artillery in warfare, 1346.

The French had come by forced marches. If they had taken some repose, by prudent arrangements victory would have been assured to them; but the impatient Philip, who had scarcely arrived in sight of the enemy, ordered an attack to be made by his Genoese archers, who formed the advanced guard. They endeavoured vainly to make him observe that they were exhausted by hunger and fatigue, and that the rain had rendered their bows useless. He renewed the order; they advanced with bravery, and were repulsed. Philip, furious, caused them to be massacred, and his brother, the Duke d'Alençon, trod them down under the hoofs of his cavalry. This ferocious act caused the loss of the army; the English took advantage of the confusion in the front ranks, and rushed upon them, and the advanced guard was thrown back upon the general body of the army, where a frightful carnage took place. Thirty thousand Frenchmen lost their lives, and amongst them eleven princes, twelve hundred nobles or knights, and the chivalrous King of Bohemia, allied with Philip, who, although blind, caused himself to

Battle of Cressy, 1346.



be led into the midst of the affray, in order to perish valiantly. The *élite* of the nobility was cut down in that bloody day's work. The celebrated Black Prince, fifteen years of age, commanded the English, under King Edward, his father, and powerfully contributed to the victory. Philip, twice wounded, and carried away by his men far from the field of battle, presented himself before the castle of Braye, only accompanied by five knights. "*Open*," said he, as he knocked at the gate, "*it is the fortune of France!*" \*

The taking of Calais was one of the most fatal results of the defeat of Cressy. The inhabitants of that town, reduced by famine to capitulate after eleven months of courageous defence, were summoned to deliver up to Edward six persons from among them upon whom that King could

Siege and  
capture of  
Calais by the  
King of England,  
1346.

sate his vengeance. At this news the people broke out into wailing. "But then," says Froissart, "there uprose the richest bourgeois of the town, whom they called *Sieur Eustache de Saint-Pierre*, and he spoke thus before them:—'Great pity and great misfortune would it be to see such a people as this perish. I have so great a hope of having grace and pardon from our Lord if I die to save this people, that I wish to be the first, and I will place myself willingly at the mercy of the King of England.' When *Eustache* had said these words the crowd was moved, men and women throwing themselves down at his feet, weeping. Then another bourgeois, who had two daughters, and was called *Jean d'Aire*, arose, and said that he would accompany his friend *Sieur Eustache*."† This noble example was followed by two brothers named *Wissant*; lastly, two other bourgeois, whose names history has not preserved, offered to share their fate. The whole six, with ropes round their necks, and bearing the keys of the town, were conducted by the governor, *John de Vienne*, to the English camp. Edward, on seeing them, called for the executioner; but the Queen and his son interceded for them and obtained their pardon. All the inhabitants of Calais were driven from

\* Some authors have denied, but without sufficient proof, the authenticity of this speech, and also that of most of the historical sayings of our kings and great men. These are, in our view, efforts to be regretted, as they tend systematically to despoil history of its poetry and its grandeur, in order to profit a doubtful and most frequently sterile science.

† Froissart.

the town, which became an English colony; and for two hundred years it was an entrance-place into France for foreign armies. The capture of this important place was followed by a truce between the two monarchs.

The disasters of the war took away nothing from the pride or the magnificence of Philip of Valois. When his treasury was empty

he altered the coinage, or else united together the prelates, barons, and certain deputies of the towns, upon whom he imposed his will. Through them he caused new taxes to be sanctioned, and it was thus that he decreed the tax of the twentieth denier on the price of all merchandise sold, and thus that he established *La Gabelle*,\* transferring to the fiscal power the monopoly of

salt throughout all the kingdom. The preamble of his edicts tended to show that they were issued for the welfare and in the interest of good people, and by the national will; however, the States-General were only on one single occasion legally convoked during this reign, and merely distinguished themselves by their servility.

The frightful plague, known under the name of *The Plague of Florence*, spread its ravages throughout France during the year 1348. It is estimated that the disease cut down

about one-third of the inhabitants of the kingdom. The ignorant and ferocious populace accused the Jews of having poisoned the rivers and fountains, and those unfortunates were burnt and massacred by thousands. So many calamities served as food for superstition and fanaticism. Enthusiasts, of both sexes, believed, like the Fakirs of India, that their sufferings were agreeable to the divine power. They could then be seen in numerous bands, traversing, half-naked, the towns and the country, cutting their shoulders with blows from the lash, in order, as they said, to blot out the sins of the world; they called themselves *Flagellants*. Their sect, persecuted and ex-

terminated by the Church, had only a short existence. Philip VI. had rendered the power of the Inquisition formidable in France; nevertheless, he authorized the appeals from abuse of the ecclesiastical tribunals to the Parliament.†

\* See Book II., Chapter III.

† This appellation was given, from the time of Saint Louis, to the appeal authorized

In 1350, already well advanced in years, he married the young Blanche de Navarre, sister of King Charles surnamed *The Bad*, and died in less than a month afterwards, at the age of fifty-eight years. He had bought the seigniory of Montpellier, for a hundred and twenty thousand crowns, from James II., last King of Majorca, and acquired from the Dauphin, Humbert II., the province of Dauphiné, which, was given in apanage to the eldest sons of the kings of France. From that time they bore the name of *Dauphins*,\* and the frontiers of the kingdom were thus extended as far as the Alps.

Death of Philip VI., 1350. Reunion of the seigniory of Montpellier and of Dauphiné with France, 1349.

by the Gallican Church against certain ecclesiastical acts in the case of usurpation or excess of power, such as the publication of bulls, pastoral letters, and other despatches of the Court of Rome, without the approbation of the Government, and, in general, all violations of the liberties and customs of the Gallican Church. There were other cases of abuse, which only interested private individuals. In this second category must be ranged the acts which, in the exercise of religion, could compromise the reputation of the citizens, or disturb their consciences by an arbitrary persecution. The injuries pronounced publicly from the pulpit, the refusal, without grounds, to proceed to a burial, &c., belong to these cases of abuse. From Philip of Valois to the French Revolution, Parliament always took up these questions; at the present day they are submitted to the Council of State.

\* This surname had been given to the Counts of Vienne (in Dauphiné) on account of the *dolphin* which they carried upon their helmets and on their armorial bearing.

## CHAPTER III.

REIGN OF KING JOHN.

1350-1364.

THE disasters of the last war with the English, the prodigalities, the frauds, the exactions of King John, and the dishonest acts of his ministers, were the principal causes which, under his reign, rendered the States-General independent of the crown, and gave them a new authority, which was almost absolute. This revolution was also partly due to the growing importance of the bourgeoisie, or of the Third Estate, in numbers and in wealth. Continual transactions with the Italians and

Progress of the  
bourgeoisie, or  
Third Estate.

people of the East had rapidly developed in the French nobility habits of great luxury. In the fourteenth century, above all, expensive tastes made marked progress, and gave full career to new branches of industry, which added to the welfare of the bourgeois class. They, when they acquired wealth, acquired also the feeling of power, and exercised more courage and perseverance in appealing to and defending the laws of individual liberty and property.

Until the reign of King John the members of this class had not appeared to be animated with any national spirit; they appeared to remain strangers to the political interests of the kingdom. As far as they were concerned, the country was restricted to the walled precincts of the city; they abandoned to the great vassals and the King the care of watching over the destinies of the state, and all their energy displayed itself at first, not against the government, which had often protected them, but against the tyrannical oppression of their respective seigniors. However, when in its turn the royal authority crushed them under an intolerable yoke, they seized, in order to resist it, upon the moment when they saw it shaken by unheard-of misfortunes and incredible mistakes, and united together against it with the nobility and clergy. The States-General from that time took an imposing

aspect; but the result of their energetic efforts was only transitory. Soon, the first two orders of the nation became frightened at the success obtained in the States against the authority of the prince; they became indignant at the importance which the order of the Third Estate had suddenly acquired, and began to see that the interests of that order, which tended to social equality, were directly opposed to their own, whose existence depended upon privileges: they abandoned it to itself. Hostile to the crown in other respects, they united with it against the Third Estate, and the disasters with which the bourgeoisie were burdened, in consequence of some ephemeral triumphs, were turned to the advantage of royal despotism.

John was more than thirty years of age when, in 1350, he succeeded Philip de Valois, his father. His education, although it had been carefully conducted, had made him more Accession of King John, 1350. a valiant knight than a wise and experienced king. Impetuous in character, irresolute in mind, rash rather than brave, prodigal, obstinate, vindictive, and full of pride, perfectly instructed in the laws of chivalry, and ignorant of the duties of the throne, he was always ready to sacrifice to the prejudices of honour, as then understood, the rights of his subjects and the interests of the state. Franco was exhausted at the time of his accession; nevertheless, he spared nothing at the fêtes of his coronation. The expense was so prodigious, and the empoverishment of the royal treasury so great, that the King, in the following year, found himself obliged to call together the States of the kingdom.

The first acts of his reign were characterized by violence and despotism. He seized upon the person of the Count d'Eu, constable, who, a prisoner of the English and free upon his parole, had come to France to gather together his Violence and despotism of King John. Execution of the Count d'Eu. ransom. John accused him of treason, and caused his head to be cut off without trial. During the same year he issued eighteen ordinances concerning the alteration of the coinage, increasing and diminishing alternately the value of the gold mark, and confiscated to his own profit all the claims of the Jew and Lombard merchants established in the kingdom. He forbade his subjects to pay what they owed to them, under penalty of being compelled to pay a second time. These disastrous ordinances struck a blow

at the heart of commerce and threatened to destroy it. Through the Jews and Italians nearly all the commerce of France was negotiated: a great number left the country; the others, in order to compensate themselves for their risk, exacted enormous profits, which increased the general misery. The King felt no fear, after these iniquitous acts, in summoning together the States of his kingdom; and such was still, at that period, the ignorance or submission of the deputies, that they did not raise a murmur. The monarch treated with those of each state in particular, obtained from each that which he wished, and then dismissed them.\*

These new resources were exhausted at the moment when the truce concluded between England and France had expired. Edward reproached King John with having deprived him of the ransom of the Constable by assassinating him, and swore to avenge himself for that crime. Another enemy, nearly as formidable, declared, about the same time, war against France; this was Charles, King of Navarre and Count of Evreux. This prince, as well as Edward, had, on the female side, rights to the throne, and he was, moreover, nearer by a degree, as he was son of a daughter of Louis le Hutin. King John, of whom he was the son-in-law, had the imprudence to incur his enmity by not paying faithfully over the dower of his daughter, while he himself piled up his wealth, and appointed as Constable the Spaniard Charles de la Cerda, the personal enemy of the King of Navarre. That monarch, whose vices and cruelties had fixed upon him the surname of *The Bad*, took the Constable by surprise at Aigle, in Normandy, and assassinated him. Then calling round him all his barons and his Norman nobles, he braved the fury of King John, who, powerless to reduce him by arms, summoned him to the throne. Charles of Navarre consented to appear there, received the pardon of the King, and became reconciled to him by the treaty of Valogue.

War, however, broke out with England. The King issued new ordinances for the falsification of the coinage; the gold mark mounted

\* This first assembly, of which the roll was afterwards rendered void, was the only one under John where the deputies of the two great divisions of the kingdom, the countries of the Langue d'Oïl and the Langue d'Oc, were represented.

up from four livres to seventeen, and then fell back again to four livres. These odious proceedings only brought into the treasury insufficient resources. The King, in order to create new means, convoked the States-General of the Langue d'Oil to Paris in 1355.

The States met together on the 2nd of December, in the Great Chamber of Parliament. The Archbishop of Rouen, Pierre de la Forest, Chancellor of France, opened the Assembly, and requested subsidies for the war. John de Craon, Archbishop of Reims, in the name of the clergy; Gauthier de Brienne, Duke of Athens, in the name of the nobility; Etienne Marcel, head magistrate of the merchants, in the name of the Third Estate,—requested permission to consult among themselves concerning the subsidies to be granted and the abuses to be reformed. Their first declaration announced that a revolution had taken place in their minds. They carried, that no rule should have the force of law until it had been approved by the three orders, and that any order which had refused its consent should not be bound by the vote of the other two. By this famous declaration, the Third Estate caused itself to be recognized as a political power, equal to that of the clergy and the nobility. The demands of the King were solemnly discussed; and, before subscribing to them, the States enacted that the value of the silver mark should be stable, and remain fixed at four livres and twelve sous. They suppressed the law of taking possession, which gave to the purveyors of the King, to the princes, and to the great officers, the right of taking, without payment, in their journeys, everything that they considered necessary for their convenience. They forbade all prosecution for the recovery of property seized from the Italian merchants, and abolished the monopolies established by people in government places. In return, they undertook to furnish thirty thousand soldiers and five millions of livres to make up the balance for a year; but they wished that this money should remain in the hands of their receivers and be levied by them. They made it also necessary that they should assemble again on the 1st of March in the following year to receive the accounts of the treasurers; then at the end of a year to renew the taxes, if there were necessity, and to provide for the expenses of the war. The King undertook to respect these conditions.

States-General of  
the Langue d'Oil,  
1355.

Important acts  
of the States.

In this manner the nation appears to have regained its ancient periodical assemblies, and the monarchy was brought to recognize the share of sovereign power between itself and the three orders of the States-General. But these latter, skilful in reforming abuses, and in gaining for themselves precious rights, showed in the assessment of taxes \* a deplorable incapacity. Composed of men without experience, assembled from all parts of the kingdom, and unknown to one another; only having obtained from the King three days in order to agree upon the means of filling the treasury, of reinsuring confidence, of organizing the army, and of driving the enemy from the kingdom, they

raised the tax of the *gabelle*, or the tax upon salt, and  
 New taxes. established an *aide* of eight deniers in the livre upon the sale of all merchandise.

The first of these taxes fell upon a commodity indispensable to all, and struck at the poorest and most numerous class; the second, in

\* From the fall of the Roman Empire, among the Gauls, there no longer existed a general annual revenue, and the feudal taxes, exacted upon the domains of the crown, constituted the only revenues of the King of France, who, in this respect, was looked upon as a simple seignior. The military service at their own expense was the only duty imposed upon the great vassals, and the natural consequence of this absence of revenue was that perpetual and arbitrary variation of the market price of money decreed by the sovereigns, in order, fictitiously, to raise the value of their feeble resources. However, in certain critical positions, the kings addressed themselves to the States-General, in order to obtain the *aides*, or extraordinary help, of which the assemblies voted the gathering for a limited period; the taxes might be upon the revenue, upon the sale of merchandise, or upon landed property. Such was the nature of the taxes established in 1335. This system continued until 1439, at which period Charles VII. established an annual and permanent tax.

There were then in France four principal branches of public revenue, the names of which reappear every moment in this history, and it is of importance to know them.

1st. The land tax, called *taille*, because in ancient times, the use of writing being little diffused, they noted the payment of this tax by means of *entailles*, or notches cut in a piece of wood. It was only collected by people of mean origin.

2nd. The *aides*. This name, which at first included all the taxes, ended by being applied specially to the taxes laid upon drinks, beasts, fish, wood, tallow and candles, the weirs of rivers and canals—in one word, to that which we call, at the present day, indirect taxation.

3rd. The *gabelle* (from the German word *gabe*, which signifies a tax). This was the tax upon salt. Little burdensome in its origin, this tax became at last the most heavy charge and the most vexatious of the whole ancient system of French finance, every head of a family throughout the most part of the provinces being compelled to buy very dearly from the royal granaries a certain quantity of salt, fixed by edicts, and representing the supposed consumption of his family.

4th. The revenues of the domain of the crown.



which persons of every estate and all conditions were included, wounded the pretensions of the nobility and clergy, and caused an intolerable inquisition to weigh heavily upon the mercantile classes, and interfered with every commercial operation.

Soon fatal symptoms of discord made themselves manifest. The people murmured, the foreign merchants abandoned the kingdom, the French merchants gave up their business, Civil troubles. and commerce was extinguished; both town and country were opposed to the *gabelle*, and spread complaints against the States everywhere. The ecclesiastics refused to pay the tax, threatening to suspend altogether the divine service. Many seditions broke out. Arras arose, and fourteen of the bourgeois were slaughtered by the mob. In the middle of these calamities the time arrived when the States ought to assemble anew; but already the people, incapable of going back to the source of evil, saw the deputies with mere distrust; they suspected them of complicity with their oppressors. A large number of the towns abstained from sending representatives to the States; the Normans and the Picards refused to be represented there, and declared that they would not pay the two established taxes. The King of Navarre and the Count d'Harcourt supported the disaffected. The new States-General, much less numerous than their predecessors, abolished the *gabelle* and the *aide* of eight deniers in the pound on the sale of all merchandise, and replaced those imposts by a tax rendered proportional to the fortune of each person.

However, the King, who had only granted a pardon to Charles of Navarre for the murder of his Constable through impotence to avenge him, seized an occasion to satisfy, at one blow, his ancient and his new resentments. He learned that on a fixed day the Dauphin had invited to his table, at the château of Rouen, the King of Navarre, the Count d'Harcourt, and some other noblemen. He immediately left Orleans, where he then resided, entered Rouen on the day appointed, followed by a numerous escort, and presented himself at the entrance of the hall where the nobles were seated at table. Lord Arnould d'Andeneham preceded him, and, drawing his sword, said, "Let no one stir for anything that he may see, unless he wishes to die by this sword." King John advanced towards the table, and the guests, seized with terror, rose in order to salute him, when, laying

his hand upon Charles of Navarre, the King stopped him, and, shaking him with rudeness, "Traitor," said he, "you are not worthy of sitting at the table of my son. I neither wish to eat nor to drink as long as you shall live." A witness of this violence, Collinet de Bréville, a knight of the King of Navarre, pointed his sword at the breast of the King, and said that he would slay him. "Let this man and his master be arrested," said King John. His sergent-at-arms immediately seized the King of Navarre, who vainly implored mercy. The Dauphin, then very young, threw himself at the feet of his father. "Oh, sire!" said he, "you will dishonour me. What will they say of me, when I have invited the King and the nobles to my house, and you have treated them thus? They will say that I have been treacherous." "Hold your peace, Charles!" answered the King; "they are evil traitors: you know not all that I know." The King then advanced some paces, and, seizing a club, he struck the Count d'Harcourt with it between the shoulders, and said, "Proud traitor! by the soul of my father you shall not escape." Two nobles of the suite of the King of Navarre were arrested with that prince and his knight. King John caused his prisoners to be dragged outside the château, and said to the chief of his guards, "Free us from these men." D'Harcourt and the three noblemen were then immediately beheaded before him. Royal dignity saved Charles of Navarre. John spared his head, but he held him prisoner closely confined in a tower of the Louvre, and seized his French apanage.\*

Arrest of Charles  
of Navarre by  
King John.

Execution of the  
Count d'Harcourt  
and other  
noblemen, 1355.

This act of violence drew down great misfortunes on the kingdom. Philip of Navarre, father of King Charles, and Geoffroy d'Harcourt, uncle of the beheaded Count, immediately united themselves with the King of England, and recognized him as the King of France, and paid him homage for their domains. Edward proclaimed himself the avenger of the executed gentlemen. He sent a formidable army into Normandy, while the Prince of Wales carried fire and sword into the heart of the country, ravaged Auvergne, Limousin, and Berry, and approached Tours. John, whose vindictive fury had brought down this tempest upon France, made an oath that he would fight with the Prince of Wales wherever he should meet him, and called together all

\* Froissart, Chronicles.

his nobility. The army assembled in 1356, in the plains of Chartres, and overtook the English in the neighbourhood of Poitiers. Already scarcity had made itself felt in the camp of the enemy, and the Black Prince offered very advantageous terms for France. If John had not fought, the English would have been conquered by famine and compelled to lay down their arms; but so much prudence did not enter into the spirit of those chivalric times. Battles were not founded on calculations, but were merely the fruit of an unexpected meeting and a warlike impulse; they decided less the existence than the honour of nations. The French army, besides, was more than fifty thousand strong, while the army of the enemy only consisted of eight thousand. King John, then, resolved to fight: he felt confident of victory.

The Black Prince had only two thousand knights, four thousand archers, and two thousand foot soldiers, and he saw before him an army of fifty thousand men, amongst whom, besides the King of France and his four sons, there were twenty-six dukes or counts, and a hundred and forty knights banneret. Battle of Poitiers, 1356. He fixed his camp at Maupertuis, two leagues north of Poitiers, upon a hill covered with hedges, bushes, and vines, impracticable for cavalry, and favourable to sharpshooters; he concealed his archers in the bushes, dug ditches, and surrounded himself with palisades and waggons. In fact, he converted his camp into a great redoubt, open only in the centre by a narrow defile, which was lined by a double hedge. At the top of this defile was the little English army, crowded together, and protected on every side. There was, moreover, an ambuscade of six hundred knights and archers behind a small hill which separated the two armies.

The French army was disposed in an oblique line, in three battalions or divisions. The left and most advanced wing was commanded by the Duke of Orleans, brother of the King; the centre, somewhat further back, by the sons of the King; the right wing or reserve by the King himself. The cries of the combatants could already have been heard, when two legates interposed their mediation. The Prince of Wales offered to restore his conquests and his prisoners, and not to serve against France for seven years; but John exacted that he should give himself up as a prisoner with a hundred knights.

The English refused, and the King, who could have taken him by famine, ordered the battle.

A corps of three hundred French men-at-arms rushed into the defile; a shower of arrows destroyed it. The corps which followed, disturbed by this attack, threw itself back upon the left wing, and threw it into disorder. This was only a combat of the advanced guard; but the English ambuscade throwing itself suddenly upon the centre division, that also was seized with panic and terror, and took to flight without having fought. At this sight, Chandos, the most illustrious captain of the English army, said to the Black Prince, "Ride forward: the day is yours!" The English descended the hill, and carried everything before them. "Three sons of the King," says Froissart, "with more than eight hundred lances, in good condition and whole, took to flight without ever approaching their enemies."\* The left wing took refuge in disorder behind the division of the King, which was already in trouble, but intact. The English went out from the defile in good order, and advancing into the plain found before them that division where was the King, his youngest son, and his brilliant staff of nobles. The French had still the advantage over their enemies, who were very inferior to them in numbers; but John, remembering, to his misfortune, that the disaster at Cressy had been caused by the French cavalry, cried out, "On foot! on foot!" He himself descended from his horse and placed himself at the head of his own men, a battle-axe in his hand. The engagement was fierce and bloody; but the French knights were unable to struggle on foot against the great horses of the English and the arrows of the archers. They fought until they were all killed or taken, but without order, by troops or by companies, as they found themselves gathered together or scattered. Thus perished all the flower of the chivalry of France. The King remained almost alone, with bare head, wounded, intrepid, fighting bravely with his axe, accompanied by his young son, who parried the blows of his enemies. He was obliged to give himself up.

The Black Prince, scarcely twenty-six years of age, showed himself worthy of his good fortune; he surrounded the vanquished King with respect, serving him at table, standing, with head uncovered, and declaring that he had deserved the prize

King John is made prisoner.

\* Chronicles.

for valour on that memorable day. Such was the disastrous issue of the celebrated battle of Poitiers. The Dauphin, already named by his father lieutenant-general of the kingdom, took the reins of state during the captivity of the King; he issued six ordinances concerning the coinage, in order to provide for the first wants of the treasury, and assembled at Paris in the same year the States of the Langue d'Oil.

The disaster of Poitiers and the captivity of the King had plunged the kingdom in sorrow, and every one, at the height of this dangerous crisis, understood the extreme importance States-General of 1356. of the States-General convoked by the Dauphin in 1356: eight hundred deputies were sent to it, and it was presided over by Charles de Blois, Duke of Brittany. On the demand for fresh subsidies, they answered by the election of several commissioners, taken from each order, and who in their imperious requests demanded—the sole power in matters of finance throughout the states; the power to bring to judgment the counsellors of the King; the creation of a permanent council of four prelates, twelve knights, and twelve bourgeois, in order to assist the young regent; lastly, the right of the States to meet together without royal convocation. Upon these conditions they agreed to furnish an army of thirty thousand men.

Jealous of the authority which the States arrogated to themselves, the Dauphin requested time for reflection; he dragged out the discussions to great length, flattered the deputies, deceived them by vain speeches, and tired them; the greater part returned to their homes; and at last the assembly separated without obtaining anything or granting anything.

The English then desolated the most beautiful provinces of the kingdom; commerce was annihilated; the soldiers, disbanded and without pay, ravaged the country. There Desolation of the kingdom. was no more safety for the peasants in their cottages, for the monks and nuns in their convents; the fields abandoned remained uncultivated, and the towns received a multitude of men without asylum and without bread, who caused famine to enter with them within their walls; the enemy, in short, was at the gates of Paris.

In the midst of so much calamity, Etienne Marcel, chief of the

merchants of the capital, a true representative of the Third Estate in the fourteenth century, displayed great courage and the qualities of a superior genius. He reanimated the Parisians, finished and fortified the precincts within the walls of the town, caused iron chains to be stretched across the streets, accustomed the bourgeois to arms, and, strengthened by an immense popularity, he presented

Celebrated  
States-General of  
1357.

himself at the famous States of 1357, convoked at Paris, in general assembly, by the Dauphin. Robert le Coq,

Bishop of Laon, spoke for the clergy, John de Péquigny for the nobility, and Etienne for the Third Estate. Assembled in a time of disorder, convoked by a prince who could do nothing without their concurrence, in the heart of an excited country, the new States reproduced the requests of the preceding assembly, adding to them other pretensions, and forcing upon him all their demands. In

Concessions of the  
Dauphin. Ordinance of 1357.

exchange for a subsidy destined to furnish thirty thousand men, and which was to be collected and managed,

not by the people of the King, but by those of the States, the Dauphin engaged solemnly to turn aside nothing for his personal interest, from the money consecrated to the defence of the kingdom, to refuse every letter of pardon for atrocious crimes, no more to sell or farm out the offices of judicature, to seek out and to punish prevaricators in the Chamber of Exchequer and in that of Public Inquiry, to establish good money, and to bring about no further change without the consent of the three States, to prohibit every prize for royal service, and to cause the collectors accused of embezzlement to render an account. Such were, in brief, the principal dispositions of the celebrated ordinance of 1357. The Dauphin swore besides that he would conclude no truce without the sanction of the States, and that he would dismiss as "unworthy of all charge," twenty-two counsellors, to whom public hatred attributed all the misfortunes of the country. The States before separating agreed to meet again three times before the end of the year, and appointed thirty-six commissioners, taken from their midst, to administrate finances and direct affairs, in concert with the prince, during the intervals of the sittings.

By these conditions, to which the Dauphin consented, we can judge

of the number of grievances raised against the court and the nobles, and of the enmity of the abuses under which the nation groaned. These reforms were attempted by the *prévôt* Etienne Marcel, and by the Bishop Robert le Coq, ancient legist, both of whom used culpable violence to sustain them. The lasting success of their great enterprise was impossible. The only class which could then rightly believe itself interested in the triumph of the principles which they established was the class of the Third Estate, or bourgeoisie, and they did not form a body animated throughout by the same spirit. Disseminated through a great number of towns, feudally in submission to a similar number of powerful nobles, and, for the most part, recently united with the kingdom, the diversity of their customs, their manners, their prejudices, and of their material interests, rendered the men of the bourgeois class rivals, and jealous of one another; no social tie existed between them; feebly affected by the general destinies of the state, which offered to them no advantage, they revolted against the sacrifices which its defence exacted. When they could do so with impunity, they disavowed their representatives, and did not lend them the support necessary against the jealousy of the privileged orders. It was necessary that the action of a central and energetic power should make itself felt in the time still to come, in order to blend together so many particular wishes in one general will, and before there could arise in France a national spirit wise enough to comprehend the advantages that a vast and powerful association could procure, and the duties that it would impose; a spirit also enlightened enough to appreciate at its just value public liberty, and strong enough to conquer it and defend it. The year 1357 was the period when the States-General had greatest power during the Middle Ages; from that time they rapidly declined; they lost, as did also the Third Estate, all political influence, and for some centuries were only empty shadows of national assemblies.

Considerations  
upon the reforms  
ordered by the  
States, in 1327.

King John had been conducted from Poitiers to Bordeaux, thence to London, and during the negotiations on the subject of his ransom a truce of two years was concluded between England and France. About the same time the death of Geoffroy d'Harcourt freed the Dauphin from an implacable foe. Charles breathed again; he had only given way by constraint to the wish of the States, and he

hastened to break from their yoke as soon as he could dispense with dissimulation. He retained the ministers whom he had promised to dismiss and prosecute, and, at their instigation, he encouraged the pretensions of the nobles and the murmurs of the people in opposition to the votes of the States. The contributions consented to by them were never paid; the prince then declared that he alone ruled, and dismissed the thirty-six commissioners. They, feeling that public opinion, the only power capable of sustaining them, had abandoned them, separated without any resistance. From that time the struggle was only sustained by the bourgeoisie of Paris, and its magistrates stretched their authority over the whole of France.\* Troubled with the hostile disposition of the Dauphin, the chiefs of the movement desired to gain a protector capable of defending them, and cast their regards upon the King of Navarre, then a prisoner in the castle of Arleux. John de Pécquigny took the fortress, and set free the King, who returned to Paris, where he was received as the future liberator of the kingdom.

The King of Navarre set at liberty by John de Pécquigny, 1358.

The new States assembled on the 17th of November, 1357, but they only found a few deputies for the clergy, and not a single noble; their influence was void, and the struggle continued between the Commons of Paris and the Dauphin, who failed in his promises, and braved public opinion by drawing nearer to his person the ministers and great officers condemned by the preceding States. No tribunal had dared to prosecute them; they affected the most profound contempt for the nation, threatening to re-establish all the abuses. The moment of the crisis had arrived. The celebrated *prévôt* of the merchants, Marcel, had recourse to violent measures. He made the Parisians adopt a national colour, and gave them for a rallying sign a red and blue hood, the colours of the town of Paris. He appeared, followed by armed men, before the Dauphin, on either side of whom he found the Lord of Conflans, Marshal of Champagne, and Robert de Clermont, Marshal of Normandy, both of whom had been proscribed by the

\* The convocation of the States-General, at Paris, on the 7th of November, 1357, was made conjointly by the Dauphin and by the *prévôt* of the merchants of Paris. "And sent his letters to the people of the Church, to the nobles, and to the walled towns, and summoned them. The said *prévôt* also sent his letters, spoken of above, with the letters of my lord the Duke."—*Chronicles of Saint-Denis*.



States. Some words were exchanged between the prince and Marcel; then, upon a sign from the *prévôt*, the men of his suite drew their swords and massacred the two marshals. The Dauphin, covered with their blood, implored his life from Marcel, who placed upon his head the red and blue hood, and conducted him to the Hotel de Ville under the safeguard of the popular colours. There the Dauphin, seized with fright, declared to the people that the two assassinated marshals were traitors, and that they had deserved their fate. Marcel was king in Paris.

Murder of the marshals of Champagne and Normandy, by the order of Etienne Marcel, prévôt of the merchants. Marcel makes himself master of Paris, 1358.

This double assassination, in restoring for some time power to the States, did not consolidate them, but, on the contrary, only rendered their fall more certain; it raised up implacable resentments in the heart of the Dauphin and amongst the nobility. Already the two privileged orders were indignant at seeing the despised bourgeois exercising a power equal to their own; secret hates fermented, the prejudices of the nobility divided the three orders, while the murder of the marshals caused discord to break out. The nobles of Champagne assembled together and demanded vengeance from the Dauphin; he, who had become regent of the kingdom by his majority, profited by these arrangements, so favourable to his designs, and called together the States at Compiègne, far from the centre of agitation; the nobility alone presented themselves in great numbers, and the reaction became imminent. Marcel foresaw the storm, and prepared for the combat; he attacked the Louvre, then out of the capital, and took possession of it; he united the town with the château, and fortified the precinct within the walls. The regent called round him the nobility, and assembled seven thousand lancers, while, by the advice of Marcel, the bourgeois of Paris proclaimed the King of Navarre their captain-general. Civil war commenced, and with it a new scourge showed itself.

Civil war, 1358.

The people in the country, utterly powerless against the oppression which presented itself on every side, overcharged with taxes by the nobles, despised by the bourgeois, pillaged by the soldiers, suffered at this period from intolerable evils. A proverb of the time describes with energy their excessive misery. The nobles were in the habit of calling these unfortunate people by the name of Jacques Bonhomme,

and said ironically, "*Jacques Bonhomme does not part with his money unless he is thrashed; but Jacques Bonhomme will pay, for he knows that he will be thrashed.*" The disaster of Poitiers increased the evils of this unfortunate class. The barons and gentlemen taken prisoners by the English, and released upon parole, submitted their serfs to atrocious persecutions in order to tear from them the price of their ransoms. Then the instinct of despair united the peasants; one sole sentiment seized their minds, that of a mad vengeance.

The Jacquerie,  
1358.

In the Beauvoisis\* they arose in a mass, and swore war to the death against the nobles. They burnt their castles, the inhabitants of which they tortured and massacred; they violated and murdered women and girls, and pushed their fury even to forcing children to eat the body of their father, which they had burnt before their eyes. In fact, they committed every excess to which ignorant and barbarous men, for a long period victims of a cruel oppression, could abandon themselves to. In a short time they were masters of all the country between the Oise and the Seine; many towns, Paris even, received them as allies against the common enemy. This rising received in history the name of *the Jacquerie*. It was soon suppressed; the nobility, invincible under its iron armour, exterminated these half-naked wretches. Dispersed before Meaux, they nearly all perished, and the plains throughout many provinces became deserted.

Paris was then besieged by the army of the Dauphin; the bourgeois suspected Charles the Bad of treachery, and dismissed him. Soon the peril of the capital became extreme, and Marcel had no other hope than that which he reposed in the prince whom they had just expelled. He had an interview with the King of Navarre; he reminded him that on the female side he was the nearest

Siege of Paris by  
the Dauphin.

\* Some people from the rural towns, without any chief, assembled in Beauvoisis, and at first did not number one hundred men, and said that all the nobles in the kingdom of France, chevaliers and knights, disgraced and betrayed the kingdom, and that it would be to the general good if they were destroyed. Then they assembled, and without further counsel, and no arms except sticks tipped with iron and knives, they issued forth. . . . And they multiplied so greatly that they were soon six thousand in number; and wherever they went their number increased; for each one of their own class followed them. (*Chronicles of Froissart*, Book I., Second Part, chap. lxxv.) But they were already so multiplied that if they had been together they would have numbered a hundred thousand men. And when they were asked why they acted so, they answered that they did not know, but they vowed to make others do the same, and did it also. — (*Ibid.*, chap. lxxvi.)

heir to the throne, and invited him to return to Paris. He engaged at the same time to give to him the title of captain-general, perhaps to proclaim him king. The King of Navarre, dazzled, accepted the offer, and it was arranged that, on the night between the 31st of July and the 1st of August, the gate and bastille of Saint-Denis should be delivered up to him. But a bourgeois named Maillard, a partisan of the Dauphin, had discovered the plot. Accompanied by armed men, he presented himself at midnight at the gate Saint-Denis, took Marcel with the keys in his hand, cried out "Treason!" and slew him with a blow on the forehead from a battle-axe. The same blow struck all the party of the tribune. The death of the famous *prévôt* smoothed the way for the regent, who entered Paris as a conqueror, leaning on the shoulder of Maillard, and signalized his power by numerous executions.

The assassination  
of Marcel,  
1358.

Meanwhile, King John, weary of his long captivity, had signed a disgraceful treaty, which gave over half of France to England. This treaty was rejected with one voice by the regent and the States of 1359. The Dauphin, who had gained popularity by this patriotic act, then declared that the ministers and great officers proscribed by the preceding States had never lost his confidence, and re-established them in their posts. He received some subsidies, but the people could not pay, and in order to sustain the war against the English—encamped at Bourg-la-Reine, two leagues from Paris—he again altered the coinage. The celebrated treaty of Brétigny (near Chartres) terminated at last the hostilities between France and England. Its principal articles declared that

Treaty of  
Brétigny, 1360.

Guienne, Poitou, South Gascony, Ponthieu, Calais, and some fiefs, should remain entirely in the possession of the King of England; that Edward should renounce his pretensions to the crown of France, to Normandy, Brittany, Maine, Touraine and Anjou, possessed by his ancestors, and that John should pay three millions of gold crowns for his ransom. The two sovereigns confirmed this treaty at Calais in 1360.

Great calamities followed the deliverance of King John. That prince, in granting his daughter to Galeas Visconti of Milan, had caused him to purchase the honour of his alliance for a hundred thousand florins. This sum was useful to France for the ransom of

the King, but was far from being sufficient. The people were laid under arbitrary taxation, and their misery increased. Numerous companies of adventurers, always in the pay of the party who offered the most, and without employment in time of peace, infested the plains; the fields remained uncultivated; and famine, followed by a plague of three years' duration, devastated the kingdom.

In the midst of so many evils a happy circumstance occurred for France. John acquired Burgundy by the death of Philip de Rouvre,\* the last duke, to whom he succeeded, in his capacity of nearest relative. But he did not at all understand the importance of this acquisition in the national interest, and hastened to detach this beautiful province anew from his crown, giving it as an apauage

Sufferings throughout the kingdom.

to his fourth son Philip, whose valorous conduct at Poitiers had gained for him the surname of *the Bold*, and the paternal predilection. Thus the second house of

Burgundy was founded, which rendered itself so formidable in France. Each of the acts of this King appears to be marked with the stamp of the most deplorable fatality. After so many faults, and in the midst of cries of distress from the nation, he contemplated uniting himself with the King of Cyprus, who was engaged in a new crusade, and, encouraged by the Pope Urban V., he took up the cross at Avignon; but he soon learned that his son, the Duke of Anjou, had fled from England, where he had left him as a hostage: from this circumstance he experienced very great affliction. If guilty of complicity with his son, the King would have violated the laws of chivalry, which he respected even to a nicety. Impatient to justify himself, he demanded a safe conduct, obtained it, and returned to England, where he died in 1364. Few kings, with his estimable qualities and right intentions, have drawn down more evils upon their people. The following beautiful sentiment has been attributed to this prince:—*If good faith were banished from the rest of the world, it ought still to be found in the hearts of kings*; a noble maxim, which would have done more honour to King John if it had always inspired his actions.

Philip the Bold, first duke of the second house of Burgundy, 1362.

Death of King John, 1364.

\* This name came to him from the castle of Rouvre, where he was born. Philip de Rouvre was the last descendant of Robert, son of Robert King of France, and founder of the first Capetian house of Burgundy.

## CHAPTER IV.

REIGN OF CHARLES V., CALLED THE WISE.

1364-1380.

WHEN Charles V. mounted the throne he was twenty-nine years of age. He had already governed France for nearly eight years. Nothing then announced in him the restorer of the monarchy. Not much esteemed by the nobility, on account of his unwarlike qualities and his conduct at Poitiers; hated by the bourgeoisie, which he had subdued by executions; weak in body, and of a sickly constitution, everything appeared likely to become an obstacle during his reign. And yet, by his address and prudence, more than by great talent, he was enabled to reconquer a large part of the provinces which his father had lost. He re-established order in the interior of the kingdom; but all this could only be done at the expense of the authority of the States-General, whom he strove to annul. His principal merit consisted in the sagacity with which he appreciated circumstances and men, arranged useful alliances, seized always the favourable moment to attack his enemies, and attached to himself skilful ministers and great generals, at the head of whom appeared Boucicaut, Olivier de Clisson, and the brave Du Guesclin. He is justly reproached with having neither respected the rights of the people nor the treaties with his enemies; but, having occupied the throne between two disastrous epochs, he ought to have double credit for the repose which France appeared to enjoy under his reign, and posterity confirmed the surname of *Wise* which he received from his contemporaries.

Nothing threw more brilliancy upon the reign of Charles V., and contributed more to his success, than the illustrious Bertrand du Guesclin. A simple Breton gentleman, with no personal advantages, accomplishments, or fortune, of a mind so little

Du Guesclin.

opened that he could never learn to read, he had nothing apparently of that which announces a hero, except his valour. This was the man who, after having fought obscurely for Charles de Blois upon the heaths of Brittany, became the first captain of the age, whom God seemed to have caused to be born a contemporary of Charles V. in order to save France. "A strong soul," says his historian, "nourished in iron, moulded under the palms, and in which Mars held school for a long period." His first exploit for Charles was a victory. Boucicaut had just taken by surprise the town of Mantes, which belonged to the King of Navarre; that of Meulan had likewise fallen into the hands of the French. The *Capital* or Seigneur of Buch, a brave Gascon captain in the service of Charles the Bad, made arrangements in order to take his revenge. He united with John Joel, an English captain, and, at the head of seven hundred lancers, three hundred archers, and five hundred foot soldiers, he awaited the French in the neighbourhood of Cocherel, near Evreux, where he arranged his troops on the height of a hill, on the border of a wood. Bertrand du Guesclin approached; he perceived that the *Capital* possessed the advantage of the ground; but his own soldiers were in want of provisions: it was necessary to give fight, and draw the enemy into the plain. Du Guesclin had not his equal in stratagems of war; he prepared an ambuscade and ordered a precipitate retreat. John Joel, deceived by this artifice, rushed forward, against the orders of the *Capital*, to the cry of "Forward, Saint George! Who loves me follows me!" The *Capital* saw the peril, and followed John Joel to save him; but then the French stopped. "Forward, friends!" cried Du Guesclin, "the day is ours. For God's sake remember that we have a new king in France, and that to-day his crown must be handselled by us!" A fierce combat then took place, and the ambuscade showed itself; thirty knights rushed upon the *Capital* at a gallop and took him prisoner. The victory was vigorously disputed: but John Joel fell, wounded to death, and the men of Navarre, without a chief, dispersed, only a small number contriving to escape. The victory of Cocherel placed in submission to Charles V. nearly the whole of Normandy. He received the news at Reims, in the midst of the fêtes of his coronation, and recompensed Du Guesclin by the gift of the county of Longueville.

Battle of  
Cocherel.

The war went on continuously in Brittany between the two aspirants, the son of John de Montfort and of the celebrated Jeanne de Flandres, allied with the English, and Charles de Blois, sustained by France. The celebrated battle of *Auray*, when the latter was slain, was soon followed by the treaty of *Guérande*, which assured the duchy of Brittany to Montfort. This treaty, signed with care by Charles V., rendered the duchy reversible to the widow and children of Charles de Blois in case Montfort died without issue. Thus terminated an atrocious war, which had lasted twenty-four years. The Duke of Montfort, under the name of John V., hastened to return to Paris, where he did homage to the King.

*Battle of Auray.  
Treaty of Gué-  
rande. End of the  
war in Brittany,  
1365.*

Charles V. found himself at last at peace with all his neighbours. His people began to breathe again, and returned to the work of the fields, interrupted for so long a period; order and peace existed once more. But the scourge of the companies of adventurers threatened to arrest this return to a better state, and to ruin the kingdom. During this period, when the caprices of princes, a gift, an exchange, or a marriage decided every day the destiny of the people, a multitude of men considered themselves as belonging to no country, and offered their swords to any one who sought their services. The length of the wars, which rendered their services necessary to so many princes; the feebleness of the laws, which seemed to authorize all kinds of disorder and violence, had, during twenty-five years, prodigiously increased the number of these greedy and licentious men. When France was at peace, they all remained without employment and without means of existence. They then spread themselves like wild beasts over the country, and there committed frightful ravages. The only means of subduing them so far had been by arming against them the national militia of the kingdom; but experience had taught Charles to fear above all things the influence of the middle classes. He refused to increase their number, and from that time, not being able to exterminate the great companies, he was compelled to employ them. For a considerable time Peter, King of Castile, surnamed the Cruel, had alienated himself from his family and subjects by acts of atrocity. He had poisoned his wife, Blanche of Bourbon, and ordered the murder of his natural brother, Henry of

*The great com-  
panies.*

Transtamare; the latter, in the hope of punishing him and of supplanting him upon the throne, implored the assistance of Charles V., and obtained it. Charles seized with eagerness this occasion of avenging Blanche, his relation, and of giving employment to the great companies, whose brigandages he feared. Du Guesclin commanded the expedition. In charging him with this difficult mission, the King embraced him with all his heart. "Valiant Bertrand," said he to him, "I owe you more than if you had conquered a province for me."

War against  
Peter the Cruel,  
King of Castile,  
1366.

These terrible adventurers, in passing near Avignon, to which place the popes for half a century had transferred their residence, levied contributions on the sovereign Pontiff. They afterwards entered Spain, and the troops of Peter disbanded themselves before them. That prince, repulsed by his subjects, driven from Portugal, where he sought a refuge with Peter the Justiciary, as barbarous as himself, abandoned his throne to his rival, and retired to the court of the Prince of Wales, who received him at Bordeaux with great honours; and Henry took possession of the crown of Castile without obstacle.

But Peter solicited succour from the English, and promised to enrich their captains; and the Prince of Wales armed in his favour without breaking with France. The great companies, who had just established Transtamare on the throne, rushed now to the side of his brother, drawn by the appetite for gold which he promised them. Du Guesclin supported Transtamare, but the latter was con-

Battle of  
Navarette, 1367.

quered by the Prince of Wales at the battle of Navarette, and Du Guesclin was made prisoner. Peter the Cruel recovered his kingdom, and his brother, a fugitive, sought refuge with the Duke of Anjou, eldest of the brothers of Charles V. and commandant of Languedoc. That prince, an enemy of the English, received Transtamare as, in the preceding year, the Prince of Wales had received Peter the Cruel.

Du Guesclin was only able to recover his liberty by defying the English prince to grant it to him. He himself fixed his ransom at a hundred thousand gold florins, and when the prince asked him how a poor knight could find such a sum: "The Kings of France and Castile will pay it," answered Bertrand; "and there are a hundred Breton knights who would sell their lands to make up that sum;



and the girls who spin, in my country, would make more than my ransom with their distaffs rather than that I should be left prisoner!" The Princess of Wales contributed twenty thousand livres on the spot, and the brave Chandos, rival of Du Guesclin, offered his purse to deliver him. Freed on parole, Du Guesclin departed in order to gather together his ransom. He returned with it; but whilst on the road he met ten poor knights, who had great difficulty in finding their ransoms. He gave them all, and arrived at Bordeaux with empty hands to retake his place in prison. Charles V. paid his ransom and set him at liberty. He then sent him anew into Spain, at the head of his army; and Du Guesclin, conqueror Battle of Montiel, 1309. at the battle of Montiel, replaced Transtamare, for a second time, upon the throne of Castile. Peter the Cruel was made prisoner. On recognizing each other, the two rival brothers threw themselves with rage upon one another, and Peter died, stabbed by the hand of Henry, in the tent of Du Guesclin.

At this period Charles contemplated the recovery of those provinces which had been ceded to the English by his father; and saw with joy Edward III. enervated, more by pleasures than by age, and his illustrious son, the Black Prince, the conqueror of Cressy, of Poitiers, and of Navarette, attacked by a wasting disease the symptoms of which were mortal. He deceived the English monarch by demonstrations of friendship, and fomented revolt in all the provinces given over to England by the treaty of Brétigny. The English treated the inhabitants of these countries more as vanquished people than as brothers and fellow-citizens. Hence arose amongst them an ardent desire to be restored to France.

Charles profited by these inclinations, and attached to himself the most influential nobles. A rising broke out in Gascony on the occasion of a hearth-tax, an imposition established by the English prince upon each fire. The Gascons claimed Rising of the Gascons against the English, 1368. that, up to that time, they had been free from all taxes, and appealed to the King of France, as sovereign of Guienne and of Gascony. Charles V., in contempt of the treaty of Brétigny, which granted these provinces in complete sovereignty to Edward, received their appeal, and caused the Black Prince to be summoned before the Chamber of Peers, as his subject. He believed he was powerful

enough at the same time to venture upon some acts of popularity without compromising his power. He dared to convoke the States, States-General, 1369. and pretended to consult them, being assured beforehand that he would find them docile. They assembled in 1369, and approved of all the acts of his reign without restriction. He prosecuted his designs against England; he increased the privileges of the revolted towns,\* which gave themselves up to France; and the clergy, won over by him, raised the people in his favour. Lastly, when he had arranged everything for success, the Court of Peers issued, in 1370, a decision declaring that, in default of having Decision of the Court of Peers against Edward III., 1370. appeared before it, Edward was deprived of his rights with regard to Aquitaine and his other possessions in France, and it confiscated them to the profit of the crown. A scullion was entrusted to carry this sentence to the English monarch, who, seized with indignation, prepared for war.

Charles V. strengthened his position with Scotland and Spain. A Recommencement of hostilities with England, 1370. Castilian fleet, victorious over the English fleet at Rochelle, opened for him Poitou; the Constable Du Guesclin subdued this province to France. The Duke of Brittany, Montfort, was from his heart devoted to the English, who had restored to him his duchy: he allied himself with Edward. But Charles knew how to manage the friendship of the Breton nobles. Two of their number, Olivier de Clisson and Du Guesclin, enjoyed his highest favour; they gained over for Charles the hearts of their compatriots, and the duke was expelled from his duchy, which allied itself with France against England. Edward, however, assembled together a powerful army; it disembarked at Calais, under the command of the Duke of Lancaster. Charles V., still struck with the recollection of Cressy and Poitiers, ordered his generals to watch the enemy, to impede his movements, and to decline to give battle. His orders were obeyed. Lancaster encamped before Paris, and an New system of warfare. English knight planted with impunity his lance in the gates of Saint Jacques. French valour, restrained

\* Royal decrees of 1370. Letters declaring that the inhabitants of Rodez should be able to transact business throughout the kingdom, without paying any rates for merchandise which they purchased (February, 1370); letters declaring that the town of Milhau should be exempt from taxes for twenty years; and an order granting privileges to the town of Tulle (May, 1370), &c. &c.

by the prudence of the monarch, bore the insulting provocations of the enemy from Calais as far as Guienne, where their army arrived exhausted and almost destroyed by disease, fatigue, and scarcity of provisions. The fortune of England tottered: its hero, the Prince of Wales, whose last and sad exploit was the sack of Limoges, was just dead; Edward III. himself was drawing near to the tomb, and was about to abandon his sceptre to the hands of an infant. His fleet had been conquered at Rochelle; his powerful army had consumed itself; already the fruits of the victory of Poitiers were lost to him, and France had recovered nearly all its provinces. The old King, so formidable in times of old, and now so humiliated, signed a truce with Charles V., and shortly afterwards died in the arms of a courtesan, leaving the throne to his grandson, the unfortunate Richard II.

Truce of Bruges  
between  
England and  
France, 1378.

Freed from his most dangerous enemy, Charles abandoned himself to his revenge against his brother-in-law, Charles the Bad, then in Spain, where he meditated an alliance with England. He compelled the son of that prince, who had come without distrust to his court, to sign an order which gave over to the French all the places possessed by his father in Normandy. He caused also De Rue and Du Tertre to be arrested, the one chamberlain of the King of Navarre, and the other governor of one of his places, and both intimate friends of their master. They were given over to an extraordinary commission, and summoned to confess that their prince was guilty of atrocious crimes, and, among others, of an attempt to poison Charles. They repelled these horrible accusations, but this did not prevent them from being condemned to death and executed as accomplices of these crimes, in order to give a ground to the suspicions which Charles V. wished to bring to bear upon his brother-in-law. Bernay, Evreux, Pont-Audemer, Avranches, Mortain, Valognes, opened their gates, and in Normandy the town of Cherbourg alone belonged to the King of Navarre.

Vengeance of  
Charles V.

This point seems to give us an opportunity for stopping a moment to glance at the politics of Charles V. Arriving, as he did, at royalty under the most unfavourable circumstances, burdened with an enormous debt to pay to foreigners, without a treasury, without an army, he had seen his subjects diminish to

Success of  
Charles V.

half in number, by war, by famine, by pestilence, and despoiled by bands of brigands, masters of the kingdom. Nevertheless, in the course of years, he had succeeded in retaking from the English Ponthieu, Quercy, Limousin, Rouergue, Saintonge, Angoumois, and Poitou. He had engaged the vassals of Upper Gascony to give

themselves over to him, expelled the Duke of Brittany  
his policy.

from his duchy, and the King of Navarre from nearly all his Norman possessions. Skilful also in exterior politics, he had favoured in Castile a revolution which, in assisting him to get rid of the pest of the great companies, promised to him a grateful ally. He attached Flanders to France, by assuring, through a marriage with his brother, Philip of Burgundy, the succession of that country; he carefully preserved the friendship of John Galéas Visconti, his brother-in-law, master of Lombardy, and that of the Emperor Charles IV.; whilst he held the Pope under his subjection at Avignon. The companies of adventurers had disappeared from the kingdom, the roads had become safe, order was re-established, royal authority was exercised without obstacle, and in all parts, at last, subjects who had been detached from the monarchy by a humiliating treaty, left the foreign yoke to become once more Frenchmen.

Charles had gathered round him, in order to assist in accomplishing these happy changes, men little elevated by their birth, but by superior merit. Amongst them must be mentioned Guillaume and Michel de Dormans, Philip de Savoisy, and Bureau de la Rivière. These men had all his confidence; they were his ministers, and not his favourites: whilst he took advantage of their counsels he always remained their master.\* He ceased to alter the money, and did not oppress the people with taxes, substituting for the *taille*, or land-tax upon villeins, the indirect tax of the *aides*, which had for its particular object the taxation of both bourgeois and noble.

This wise conduct ought to be attributed equally to his solicitude for his subjects and the fear with which they inspired him. Never did he forget that the people had made him tremble when he was only Dauphin; and he rarely pardoned an offence. However, he knew

\* For this reason, Fréret is reported to have said of him, "Never, prince, received any counsel, and allowed himself to be less governed."

how to put off chastisement, and he was, according to circumstances, master of his pity and likewise of his anger. When the English armies laid waste the country and burnt the tillages under his eyes, no sign of pity escaped from him; and Froissart, the historian of the period, narrates that in all these conflagrations he could only see smoke, which could not drive him from his inheritance. In his connection with the people, lastly, his principal aim seems to have been to compel them to submit to the sovereign will, without hearing a murmur, and without experiencing any resistance. He only once convoked the States-General during his reign, and substituted for them assemblies of the most considerable inhabitants, where he only admitted members of the Parliament and of the university, some prelates, and his great officers of state. The political power of the Third Estate found itself enfeebled; but at the same time Charles V., jealous of keeping the balance between the different classes of the nation, despoiled the nobles of many of their privileges. A  
 -decree of 1372 exclusively reserved to the crown the Celebrated  
decree of 1372. right of granting charters to the municipalities, and of letters of ennoblement to private individuals.

It was from the interior of his palace that he mysteriously directed all these intrigues. Prudence had always directed his policy; and that which was the particular aim which he proposed to himself in all his acts, that which he strove to reach, was the only one which was then suited to the true interests of France. The end of this reign was not free from storms. Charles saw awakening round him in all directions symptoms of that fermentation, of that liberal tendency in men's minds, which he had taken such great care to suppress. Sectarians, known under the name of Bégains or Turlupins, multiplied in his states: he allowed a large number of these unfortunates to be burnt alive; but the executions could not restrain the flight of human reason. New sects were formed, and the great Schism of the East stimulated throughout Europe the spirit of doubt and of inquiry.

Gregory XI. died in 1378 at Rome, and the College of Cardinals gave him for a successor Bartholomew Prognagni, who took the name of Urban VI. The violent conduct of the new Pope soon alienated from him those who had crowned him; threatened by him, they all

declared that his election was illegal; they chose Robert of Genoa, who took the name of Clement VII., and went to take up his residence at Avignon. Such was the origin of the famous Schism of the East. Europe divided itself between the two popes, each kingdom following its own political interests.

*Great Schism of the East, 1379.*

Charles V. declared himself for Clement, who resided in France; his allies, the sovereigns of Naples, of Castile, and Aragon, followed his example. The party of Urban VI. was embraced by England, by Bohemia, Hungary, Portugal, and Flanders. Charles, in declaring for one who was hereafter to be declared anti-pope, opened up, in spite of himself, new views to the independence of human reason and unbelief.

The symptoms of agitation thus visibly arising were not the only alarming movements which he saw in his latter years. Conqueror of the English without having fought them, he thought himself master enough over the minds of the Bretons to confiscate their province and to unite it to his domain. He deceived himself. The Duke John V., summoned by his order before the court of the Parliament, was judged by it before his summons was notified to him in Flanders, where he resided, and condemned without being heard, as being guilty of an alliance with England against his sovereign. He was declared deprived of his titles in Brittany, and the Parliament confiscated his duchy in contempt of the rights of the widow and children of Charles de Blois, expressly reserved in the treaty of Guérande. Charles V. did not gather any fruit from this unjust act. The inhabitants of that country, jealous of their national independence, arose in a body, recalled their duke, and welcomed him as their liberator; the brave Breton captains left the royal army; Du Guesclin, always faithful to the King, disapproved of his course, and became suspicious of him: his noble pride made him indignant. It is said that he wished to give up his Constable's sword, and was anxious to retire to Spain, in order to die there; but, before leaving the standard of Charles, he went to rejoin the Marshal de Sancerre, his friend, and one of the most illustrious warriors of the age, before the little place of Château-Randon, in Gévaudan, which he was then besieging. He

*Confiscation of the duchy of Brittany. Revolt of the Bretons.*

was attacked by a fatal malady. Feeling that death was approaching, he raised himself upon his couch, and taking in his victorious hands the sword of the Constable, he looked upon it in silence, with tears <sup>in his eyes.</sup> "It has aided me," said he, "to conquer the enemies of my King, but it has given me cruel enemies near him." Then, turning towards Saucerre, "I deliver it over to you," continued he; "and I protest that I have never betrayed the honour that the King did me when he entrusted it to me." He bowed his head, kissed his noble sword, and said to the old captains who surrounded him, "Forget not, in whatever land you may be engaged in war, that people of the Church, women, and children, are not your enemies." Upon the point of death, he dictated these words for Olivier de Clisson, his companion in arms. "My Lord Olivier, I feel that death approaches closely, and cannot say many things to you. You will say to the King that I am greatly grieved that I cannot serve him longer, and that, if God had granted me the time, I had good hope of clearing his kingdom of his English enemies. He has good servants, who will exert themselves as much as I have done, especially you, my Lord Olivier, the first before all. I pray you deliver to the King the sword of the Constable; he will know well how to dispose of it, and make choice of a person worthy of it. I commend to him my wife and my brother. Adieu! I am not able to do more." The garrison of Randon had promised to give up the town if it were not succoured, and, faithful to its word, it deposited the keys of the town upon the coffin of the great captain.

Illness and  
death of Du  
Guesclin, 1380.

Charles persevered in his objects of usurpation; but his troops were driven from Brittany, and he met everywhere with the same unanimity against himself which a short time ago had been shown in his favour against the English.

Reversal of  
Charles V. in  
Brittany.

Louis, Count of Flanders, also solicited assistance at the same time against his revolted subjects. A formidable rising also broke out in Languedoc, where the Duke of Anjou, brother of the King, crushed the people by an intolerable oppression. Charles was compelled to recall his brother, and took his government from him. He, lastly, saw the King of Navarre give up Cherbourg to the English, and a new English army fall upon the kingdom.

Rising of Lan-  
guedoc.

He ordered that it should be received in the same manner as that which preceded it. In the meanwhile, he died at his Death of Charles V., 1380. Castle of Beauty, on the Marne. His death was that of a Christian and of a monarch who had been long tried by the hardships of fortune. He assembled round him the prelates, the barons, and the members of his council, and addressed them on the different acts of his policy in a touching discourse, full of wisdom. Then he requested them to bring the crown of thorns of the Saviour, which they then believed that they possessed at Paris among a number of sacred relics. It was placed on high before him, and he prayed for a long time, fixing his eyes upon it. Afterwards, having caused his perishable crown—that used at the coronation of the kings—to be placed at his feet, he said, “O crown of France, that art precious and vile at the same time—precious, as the symbol of justice; but vile, and most vile of all things, when we consider the labour, the anguish, the perils of the soul, the pains of the heart, the conscience, and the body, which thou castest upon those which bear thee—those who know all these things would rather leave thee lying in the mud than raise thee in order to place thee on their heads!” Afterwards, having received the extreme unction, the King ordered that the doors should be opened to his officers and to the people, and said, “I know that in the government of my kingdom I have given many causes of offence; for that I pray you accord me mercy: pardon me.”\* He then raised his arms, and stretched out his hands over all, in the midst of sighs and tears. He gave his blessing to his eldest son, the Dauphin, then eleven years old; and whilst they read the Passion of the Saviour, from the Gospel of Saint John, he expired in the arms of the Lord of La Rivière, whom he tenderly loved, on the 26th of September, 1380, at the age of forty-four years. He had scarcely closed his eyes when his nearest relatives gave vent to the evil passions which they had restrained during his life. The eldest of his brothers and one of the tutors of his son, the avaricious and fierce Duke of Anjou, rushed into his chamber, seized his jewels, and pillaged the palace. The new reign commenced under these darkening auspices.

\* *Livre des Faicts et bonnes Mœurs du sage Roy Charles V.* Par Christine de Pisan.



The arts and sciences were still very slightly cultivated in France during the reigns of John and Charles V.; while at the same time they began to flourish in Italy, where Dante and Petrarch were then famous. The French nobles gave themselves up entirely to warlike exercises, and had the most profound contempt for men of intellect; the most celebrated captains could only sign their names with difficulty, and Du Guesclin could not read. The principal works of antiquity, however, began to be known; already there were several translations of Titus Livius, Sallust, and of Cæsar. The historian Froissart lived, and his simple and picturesque chronicle is one of the most precious monuments of modern history. Charles V., one of the most educated men of his time, may be looked upon as the founder of the Bibliothèque Royale. His father had only left him twenty volumes; he collected together nine hundred, a prodigious number for the period. The greater part were books on theology, canon law, and astrology, the only sciences which were then studied.

General observations. Literature and science.

Froissart.

From the thirteenth century, clocks with wheels, spectacles, paper, earthenware, and crystal mirrors were known in Italy. The towns of that beautiful country, and also those of Flanders, possessed manufactures and enriched themselves by commerce, whilst war was almost the only occupation of the French. Gunpowder, which was frequently used in sieges, was despised in battles. The nobles did not care to favour the use of an arm which, in neutralizing individual force, must contribute to the levelling of the ranks.

The studies of the universities only taught the art of sustaining the vain disputes of scholastic theology. Careful to repulse everything that could encroach upon the authority of the Church, the popes interdicted in the universities the study of civil law, and only tolerated that of canon law. They still often decided the destinies of empires; it was thus that Urban V., in granting permission to Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, to marry Marguerite of Flanders, the licence for which he had refused to the son of Edward III., finally assured to the house of France the inheritance of that powerful count. The same Pope was again taken as arbiter by Charles V. and Charles the Bad, on the subject of their pretensions to Burgundy; and later, Gregory XI. caused his mediation to be accepted between the Kings of

France and England. The former, agreeing with the popes in their designs against progress and the spirit of independence, resisted them at all times when the rights that they arrogated to themselves encroached upon those which he himself believed that he possessed, and he dared to take the title of King before his coronation.\* One of the ordinances

Royal ordi-  
nances.

which does most honour to his memory is that by which he armed justice against his own authority. He forbade Parliament to modify or to suspend its judgments in virtue of any order sealed with the royal seal. He had already made the Parliament permanent, which, until then, only assembled twice in the year, at Pâques and Toussaint, and had established it in the ancient Palace of the Kings, in the city of Paris. Another ordinance, equally celebrated, was issued by this prince. In order to shorten the stormy time which he foresaw would occur during the minority of his successor, he fixed the majority of the kings at fourteen years. This dangerous innovation was too often fatal to France.

## CHAPTER V.

## REIGN OF CHARLES VI.

1380-1422.

THE disasters of the last wars had cut down the first nobility of the kingdom: after the defeats of Cressy and Poitiers, amongst the great vassals of France there only remained <sup>Situation of France.</sup> the Dukes of Brittany and Burgundy\* who lived in such state that they could hold up their heads with the monarch; the royal family had profited by the decline of the others. Nevertheless, in spite of so many blows aimed at the high feudal aristocracy, the spirit of feudality existed still in its strength, and at the side of the monarch arose a new aristocracy, as formidable to the throne; it consisted of princes of the royal family. They had received in apanage the states which the kings ought to have united to their domains, and for the most part they governed with harshness the people who were intrusted to their care.

From the end of the last reign insurrections had broken out in many parts of the kingdom and in the states feudally obedient to the crown of France. This agitation soon <sup>Insurrections and anarchy.</sup> became general. The people suffered, crushed and despoiled by avaricious tyrants, and formidable insurrections were quenched in

\* The duchy of Burgundy, properly speaking, in 1363, at the accession of the house of Valois, only comprised the towns of Dijon, Beaune, Auxonne and Châtillon, with their territories. By his marriage with Marguerite of Flanders, heiress of Count Louis II., Philip the Bold received in 1384 the counties of Flanders, Artois, Rhétel, Nevers, and Burgundy (free county). The vast possessions of this house were extended still further under Charles VII. It acquired by the treaty of Arras (1435), in the east of France, the counties of Mâcon and Auxerre, and the seignior of Bar; to the north the counties of Guignes and Ponthieu. It finally gained by succession, by marriages, and by purchase, Hainaut, Brabant, Limbourg, Luxembourg, the counties of Frise, of Zealand, of Holland, the towns of Antwerp and Malines, and the duchy of Gueldre. (See *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne de la Maison de Valois*, by Baron de Barante.)

streams of blood. A deep exasperation existed between the nobility and the inferior classes ; but the struggle was not equal : the nobles knew how to unite together, to bear down in a body on their isolated enemies, and to strike them separately. The barbarity and the superstition of the people arrested all their efforts to obtain a better destiny, and, when a stroke of fortune threw the power for a moment into their hands, they could not make a better use of it than their noble oppressors. So many causes of dissolution, united together, plunged France into frightful anarchy, and made the reign

*Sad state of  
Europe.*

of Charles VI. the most disastrous period in French history. At the moment when this King, a minor, mounted his throne, England, submissive to Richard II., bore also the evils of a minority : the empire of Germany had for a chief, in Venceslas, son of Charles IV., a prince brutified by intemperance ; Charles the Bad reigned in Navarre ; Jeanne I., murderess of her husband, governed Naples, and two candidates for the papacy, Urban VI. and Clement VII., shook the Christian world by discharging at each other mutual anathemas. All the people suffered from frightful calamities ; but none of them were more crushed than the French people.

Charles VI. had arrived at the age of eleven years and some months when his father died. His three paternal

*Accession of  
Charles VI., 1360.*

uncles, the Dukes of Anjou, Berry, and Burgundy, and his maternal uncle, the Duke of Bourbon, disputed among themselves concerning his guardianship and the regency. They agreed to emancipate the young King immediately after his coronation, which was to take place during the year, and the regency was to remain until that period in the hands of the eldest, the Duke of Anjou, the same who, given by his father as a hostage, fled from England, and whose first act was to appropriate the treasure amassed by the late King. Nature had endowed Charles VI. with amiable qualities ; he was benevolent and full of grace and affability. His uncles vied with each other in stilling this happy disposition ; they were bent on persuading him that the most glorious triumphs for a King are those which he gains over his own subjects. A wise administration could have closed the wounds of the people. The English army conducted into Brittany by Buckingham was dissolved, and the sixteen millions left by Charles V. would have been more than sufficient to free France from

the foreigners. But the Duke of Anjou, adopted by Jeanne of Naples as her successor,\* and impatient to be seated on her throne, had received this treasure to defray the expenses of an expedition against Charles de Duras, his rival. He soon raised a numerous army; it perished in Italy, mowed down by privations, fatigue, and disease, and he himself died miserably in the country which he had come to conquer.

The beginning of this reign was signalized by popular movements. A report had spread about that the late King on his deathbed had decreed the abolition of all the taxes, and, according to the chronicle of Saint-Denis, each one throughout the kingdom of France ardently desired liberty, and thought only of shaking off the yoke of the taxes. Fearing an insurrection, the governing princes issued a decree abolishing in perpetuity the established taxes, under some name that had existed since the time of Philip the Fair. However, it was necessary to provide for the cost of the war against England, and for other expenses: the treasury was empty, and the revenues of the royal domain were very inadequate. They did not dare to convok the States-General, and they could draw nothing from the assemblies of the nobles. It was necessary to re-establish a tax upon merchandise of every kind. Immediately a for- New taxes. midable tumult broke out; the Parisians ran to the arsenal, where they found mallets of lead intended for the defence of the town, and under the blows from which the greater part of the collectors of the new tax perished; from the weapons Insurrection of the Maillotins, 1340. used the insurgents took the name of *Maillotins*. Reims, Châlons, Orleans, Blois, and Rouen rose at the example of the capital.

\* This prince, in favour of whom King John had newly constituted in appanage the duchy of Anjou, reunited to the crown by Philip VI., was the head of the second house of Anjou which reigned at Naples, or rather which claimed that crown. The first house of Anjou, founded by Charles, brother of Saint Louis, was only represented in 1330 by Jeanne I., Queen of Naples, and by Charles de Durazzo (or Duras) of Anjou, her cousin. Jeanne, to the detriment of her natural heir, adopted Louis, son of King John; and from that time commenced a long struggle between the second house of Anjou and the royal branch of Durazzo. Louis I. in 1383, and Louis II. in 1390, both invaded the kingdom, but neither of them could hold it. The Durazzo (or Duras) reigned until 1425. At this period Jeanne II. died: she was daughter and last heiress to Charles de Durazzo, and her succession caused a new war to break out.—See further forward in this volume, *The State of Italy at the end of the fifteenth century* (Reign of Charles VIII.)

The States-General of the Langue d'Oïl were then convoked at Compiègne, and separated without having granted anything. The Parisians were always in arms, and the dukes, powerless to make them submit, treated with them, and contented themselves with the offer of a hundred thousand livres. The chastisement was put off for a time.

The Duke of Berry, Governor of Languedoc, then reduced the inhabitants of that province to despair. A crowd of wretched men, despoiled of every resource, concealed themselves in the forests and mountains of Cévennes, where they formed themselves into bands, which were known by the name of *Tuchins*, and which were, for a long period, the terror of the nobles and men of wealth.

The estates of the north, held under the crown, were neither more peaceable nor more happy. Count Louis of Flanders, driven away by his people, whose municipal franchises he had violated every day, now burning with a desire to avenge himself, obtained the support of the young king, his sovereign. A numerous army of knights assembled together, and Charles marched at its head; Clisson was appointed Constable, and the brave Sancerre commanded under him. The French army met near to Rosebecque an army of fifty thousand Flemings, commanded by Philip Artevelt, son of the famous brewer who was leader of the sedition in 1336. The Flemings occupied an excellent defensive position; they wished to march against the enemy, and demanded battle with loud cries. Artevelt, compelled to accede to this desire, formed all his army into a square phalanx; all the men were tied together with cords, and he himself took his place in the midst of his brave men of Ghent. Then this enormous and compact mass advanced, their pikes lowered, with a regular and firm step, and without uttering a word. The artillery of the King could not break this terrible phalanx; the Flemings advanced, so say the chroniclers, with the impetuosity of wild boars. The French line recoiled; but the enemy presented a smaller front than they did, and were soon surrounded on all sides. After the first shock, the two wings of the royal army fell, at the same moment, on this mass, which was incapable of deploying or defending itself; the Flemings were driven

New Jacquerie  
in Languedoc.

War with Flan-  
ders. Battle of  
Rosebecque,  
1332.

back upon themselves by the long lances of the knights, and thousands of men perished by suffocation without receiving a wound; the carnage was frightful. Philip Artevelt perished in the fight. The towns of Flanders were given over by the conqueror to flames and pillage; Ghent alone still resisted. Courtray, guilty only of having been the theatre of an ancient defeat of the French, was, by order of the young King, destroyed from foundation to roof, and all the inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex, were massacred. The victorious army returned to Paris; the moment for striking the rebels had arrived.

The Parisians perceived with fear that defence was impossible, and received the order to lay down their arms. The young King of fourteen years entered the town as an irritated conqueror; refusing to pass through the gates, he caused a breach to be made in the walls of the town, and it was through it that he penetrated to the capital.

For many days he remained silent; Paris was in anguish. At last the scaffolds were erected, and the

Chastisement of  
the Parisians.

executions commenced; one hundred of the richest inhabitants were executed, and among this number was the virtuous John Desmarest, advocate-general to the Parliament, whose crime con-

Execution of  
John Desmarest.

sisted in being desirous to conciliate all parties. "Master John," they said to him, while leading him to execution, "cry to the King, in order that he may pardon you." Desmarest answered, "I have served King Philip his grandfather, King John, and King Charles his father, well and loyally; never could those three kings reproach me, and this monarch would not have done so if he had had knowledge of mankind; to God alone I wish to cry for mercy."

A crowd of other citizens awaited their sentences. The dukes then threw themselves at the feet of the King, and feigned to beg mercy for the town, begging him to convert the executions into fines. Charles listened favourably to their covetous wishes. The wealth of the bourgeoisie was confiscated, all the taxes were re-established, and Paris lost its municipal privileges, together with the right of electing its *prévôt* and civil magistrates. The soldiers demolished the principal gates, and tore away the iron chains which served as a defence in all the streets. Rouen, Reims, Châlons, Troyes, Gens, and Orleans, were treated in a similar manner, by royal commis-

sioners, who ordered confiscations and executions. The dukes seized upon all the money from the towns, and spent it in profusion, while the treasury remained empty.

The revolt of Flanders was not stifled; so many atrocities committed by the French had excited general horror and indignation; the town of Ghent, which alone contained more than one hundred thousand souls, showed the example of perseverance and courage. Ackermann commanded it; Pierre Dubois and he reanimated the Flemings, and allied themselves with Richard II., King of England. An English army, commanded by the Bishop of Norwich, descended upon Flanders, pillaged it, and sacked the towns, which were occupied by French garrisons contrary to the wish of their inhabitants. Charles VI. marched forward to meet the English. Flanders, the victim of its protectors and of its enemies, became a theatre of incendiarism and murder. The heroism of the men of Ghent saved that unfortunate country, and the two parties, gorged with booty, longed for peace on either side. The Count of Flanders alone, furious against the town of Ghent, impeded the negotiations; while the Duke of Berry, impatient of all delay, stabbed the Count with his dagger and killed him. The death of Count Louis terminated the war: a truce was signed in 1384, and Flanders passed to the Duke of Burgundy, who had married Marguerite, heiress to that powerful county. Ghent submitted itself to that prince in the following year, and preserved all its franchises.

Flanders is transmitted to the Duke of Burgundy, 1384.

Hostilities commenced, during that year, between France and England. Charles sent an army into Scotland, under the command of John of Vienna, admiral of France; it disembarked near Edinburgh, which then barely contained four hundred houses of a rough appearance. Another army marched into Castile in order to oppose John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, uncle of Richard II., and claimant of the crown of that kingdom; lastly, Charles himself, and his uncles, made arrangements for a descent upon England. Immense preparations were ordered; in Flanders a formidable army assembled, of which twenty thousand knights and as many archers formed the principal force; fifteen hundred vessels had to serve for transport. It was

Project of a descent upon England; immense preparations, 1336.



desired that a town should be ready to receive the army when it disembarked; Olivier de Clisson, the Constable, caused one to be constructed, of three thousand paces in diameter, in the forests of Brittany; it was capable of being taken to pieces, and would then form the cargo of seventy-two vessels. This enormous armament met at the port of Ecluse. But the King forgot himself in the midst of his fêtes. He started, but pleasures retarded his march. He only came to the place of meeting at the end of November, and the Duke of Berry caused him to wait for a still longer period. On arriving, he dissuaded Charles from the expedition; the King gave it up, disbanded the army, and abandoned the supplies to the pillage of the chiefs. Three millions of livres were thus lost, without profit to the nation and without profit to the King. The French army sent to the succour of the Scotch against England was beaten. That which fought in Castile was not more fortunate; and shame was the only fruit of so many ambitious projects. Two years later, Charles, always enamoured of war, and directed by his uncles, sustained the Duke of Brabant, and made war for him, without success, against the Duke of Gueldre. Harassed and pursued by German marauders, his army returned to France in distress and burdened with humiliations.

Disbanding of  
the army.

Reverses of the  
French in Scot-  
land, in Castile,  
and in Gueldre,  
1366-1388.

The King at length opened his eyes; he attended to the ancient counsellors of his father; they, and amongst others, Bureau de la Rivière, Jean de Noyant, and the Cardinal Bishop of Laon, Pierre Montargis, showed him that the finances were plundered, justice unknown, public safety without guarantee, instruction of the young abandoned, the roads, the fortified places, and the arsenals falling into ruins for want of being repaired; above all, they pointed out the general frightful state of disorder, produced by the rapacity of the princes and the nobles, to which they attributed, with justice, so many misfortunes. Charles permitted himself to be convinced, and in a great council, where the Cardinal of Laon requested him to exercise the royal power at once, without participation, he signified to his uncles that he alone would govern. This unexpected declaration announced a happy revolution for the people; but a few days afterwards a sinister event struck every heart with fear: the Cardinal of Laon died from poison.

The Duke of Burgundy immediately left for Dijon, and the Duke of Berry, already the murderer of the Count of Flanders, retired into Languedoc.

After having borne the yoke of his uncles, of which one alone, the Duke of Bourbon, deserves some esteem, Charles VI. took wise measures in the interests of the people. He would have done much more in the same direction if he had had more knowledge, and less taste for pleasure. Bureau de la Rivière, Lamercier, the Lord of Noviant, Le Bègue de Vilaine, all honourably known under the preceding reign, formed the royal council, which was directed by Olivier de Clisson. Soon a crowd of officers, avaricious despoilers of the people, were destitute. The irritated princes designated under the contemptuous nickname of *marmousets* (little monkeys), or *petites gens* (little women), the members of the new government, which the nation received with favour and hope.

The King governs  
by himself, 1389.

Government of  
the Marmousets,  
1389.

Charles also gave his attention to the extinction of the Grand Schism; but neither of the two Popes would show himself disposed to sacrifice his pretensions or his rights to the interests of Christianity; the efforts of the King in this respect were powerless. He turned his attention towards the interior of the kingdom, and undertook a journey to the south of France. Fêtes awaited him in all the towns; but the groans of the people reached him in the midst of his licentious pleasures. He saw Languedoc laid waste; the

Deplorable state  
of Languedoc.  
Journey of the  
King through  
that province,  
1389.

frightful misery of that beautiful province attested to the barbarity of the Duke of Berry, his guardian. Bétizac, the minister of his extortions, was arrested by order of the King. A general cry was raised against him; the lay judges, however, dared not condemn him, and sentence of death was only obtained by denouncing him in the Church as a heretic. Charles dismissed the Duke of Berry, his uncle,

Useful reforms.

and afterwards freed the province from the brigands who infested it. Lastly, interesting himself in the progress of the morality of the people and in military instruction, he closed the gaming-houses, and opened everywhere shooting-grounds for the bow and the crossbow. These happy omens of a better future were of short duration. The Constable de Clisson, chief of the

*Marmousets*, in going out from the royal hotel of Saint Paul, was attacked and struck with many blows by brigands in the pay of Montfort, Duke of Brittany, his mortal enemy. Attempted assassination of the Constable De Clisson, 1392. Clisson did not die from his wounds, and the King, in a fury, swore to avenge him. He commanded the Duke to deliver up Craon, the chief of the assassins, who had taken refuge with him; Montfort refused, and Charles marched into Brittany with an army. He went out from Mans, at the head of his troops, in the month of July, in the year 1392, and passed through a forest, when a man in delirium rushed before the King, seized the reins of his horse, and said: "*O King! go not further forward; you are betrayed!*" The guards removed the man; the King kept silent and continued his march, but the words had taken possession of him. For a long time previously his excesses had shaken his brain. Suddenly, his lance, which was carried by one of his pages, struck against the helmet of his squire. At this noise Charles shuddered; he turned towards the place, and cried out, "*I am betrayed!*" Then forcing his horse into a gallop, he rushed sword in hand upon his officers, and killed those whom he could reach: he was mad. Charles VI. becomes mad.

Then commenced the third and fatal epoch of that disastrous reign. The faction of the dukes again seized power; the Duke of Burgundy took possession of the right of the royal signature and exercised sole authority; the army which marched into Brittany was dissolved; the council of the King was broken up; all his ministers were prosecuted and thrown into dungeons; the Constable took flight, and retired into Brittany, where he recommenced the war against Montfort. The Parliament was subservient to the passions of the Duke of Burgundy; it banished the Constable as a traitor, and condemned him to pay a fine of a hundred thousand silver marks. The Jews, wisely taken care of by the late monarch, always offered great resources to the state; but being creditors of the nobles and charged with maledictions by the clergy, they were driven away. Worse than all, the princes caused the shooting-grounds for the crossbow to be closed, and opened the gambling-houses, well knowing that when one wishes to tyrannize over a people it is necessary to disarm it and corrupt it. Such were the first deeds which signalized that horrible period.

Soon after frightful dissensions broke out among the princes themselves.

No fundamental law existed which could regulate the future of the monarchy and decide between so many rival pretensions. The fate of the state was then abandoned to a royal council,\* which was ruled by the uncles of the King, whose barbarous avidity was too well known; by his wife, the Queen Isabeau of Bavaria, whom the people called Lady Venus (*Dame Vénus*), a frivolous and avaricious princess, passionately fond of fêtes and pleasure; and, lastly, by the Duke of Orleans, brother of the King, who had been at first excluded from the government by his uncles, and who quickly showed himself their emulator in despotism and cupidity. Charles was still considered to be reigning; each one sought in turn to get possession of him, and each one watched his lucid moments in order to stand well in power. His flashes of reason were still more melancholy than his fits of delirium. Incapable of attending to his affairs, or of having a will of his own, always subservient to the dominant party, he appeared to employ his few glimmerings of reason only in sanctioning the most tyrannical acts and the most odious abuses. It was in this manner that the kingdom of France was governed during twenty-eight years.

The malady of the King was attributed to enchantment; the princes and the nobles profited by this to strike those whom they wanted to put out of the way. Valentina of Milan, wife of the Duke of Orleans, was herself accused of sorcery, and taken away, under that pretext, from Charles, whose confidence she had gained.

Nevertheless, the unfortunate Charles VI. attributed his disease to the schism which desolated Christianity, and believed himself punished by Heaven for having neglected to extinguish it. The inflexible Pierre de Luna, who took the name of Benedict XIII., had replaced the anti-

Course of the  
Great Schism of  
the East. State  
of Europe and of  
France.

\* This council, besides the Queen, the Duke of Orleans, the Dukes of Berry, of Burgundy, and of Bourbon, was composed of Charles III., King of Navarre, and of his brother, the Count of Mortain; of three princes of the branch of Bourbon, of the Duke of Brittany, and of the Count of Alençon. In 1400, the Duke of Anjou, Louis II., driven from Naples, sat there with the title of King of Sicily; and in 1404 the Duke of Burgundy, John the Fearless, caused his two brothers to be admitted.

pope Clement VII. In vain the King had recourse to prayers and to force in order to urge him and the legitimately elected Pope, Boniface IX., to a mutual cession. The obstinate Pierre de Luna resisted the soldiers who besieged him in his palace of Avignon, as he had resisted the wishes of the King, of the Sorbonne, and of the clergy. To so many scandals was added an invasion of Europe by the Turks almost as formidable as that under Abderame; the Greek empire and Hungary were invaded, and the ferocious Sultan Bajazet boasted that he would lead his horse to eat oats in Rome upon the altar of Saint Peter. Sigismund, afterwards Emperor, and then King of Hungary, requested assistance from France. A brilliant army, the chosen of the youth of France, set out under the orders of the Count of Nevers, eldest son of the Duke of Burgundy; they crossed the Danube and besieged Nicopolis, in Bulgaria; but under the walls of that town the Christian army was exterminated by Bajazet, and the conqueror only spared the lives of Battle of Nicopolis, 1396. twenty princes and high nobles, for whom he hoped to receive immense ransoms: that of the Count of Nevers was two hundred thousand crowns, and the people of Burgundy paid it.

The principal states of Europe were then the prey to anarchy or civil war; but the unskilful chiefs who then governed France did not know how to profit by this favourable circumstance so as to maintain peace, then so necessary for the kingdom. England had accomplished a revolution by breaking the absolute power of Richard II. Deposed by the Parliament, that monarch was assassinated; Hereford, Duke of Lancaster,\* cousin of Richard, and proscribed by him, reigned in his place under the name of Henry IV., and struggled against rebellions which sprung up incessantly. It was the interest of the council of the King of France to keep well with him: but the Duke of Orleans, whose influence increased every day, was bent upon exciting his anger by deadly insults: Administration of the Duke of Orleans. he broke the truce, and let loose the most frightful calamities upon the kingdom.

This prince, after the death of his uncle Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, came up in 1404, and exercised, without curb, an absolute

\* The father of Hereford was the third son of King Edward III. Richard II. was the son of the eldest, the celebrated Black Prince.

power, and decreed an enormous tax, of which he divided the produce with the Queen. The misery of the people became intolerable. The law of taxation was exercised pitilessly upon the cottages, and even upon the hospitals; the poor and the sick were violently despoiled by all the officers of the nobles. This law was at last suspended for four years by those who had most abused it. The princes dissipated the money of the treasury in fêtes and orgies; while the unfortunate King, deserted by all, deprived of attention, devoured by vermin, and often famished, alone understood the evils of the people, because he partook of them himself, and compassionated the sufferings which he was unable to soothe.

The Duke of Orleans soon met with a formidable rival in the new Duke of Burgundy, the same John, Count of Nevers, who was conquered at Nicopolis, and whose audacity in that deplorable expedition had bestowed on him the surname of John the Fearless, a vindictive, cruel, and ambitious prince, fatal to his race and his country. He arrived from his county of Flanders at the head of an army. At his approach the Queen and the Duke of Orleans retired to Melun; but Burgundy seized the royal princes and princesses, and guarded them in Paris, where he flattered the popular passions, restored to the bourgeois their arms and their franchises, taken away since the sedition of 1382. His rival, on the contrary, relied on the aristocracy. Both of them assembled troops together, and civil war was on the point of breaking out. The other princes, however, maintained peace. On the same day the two enemies were reconciled, embraced, and conversed together. On the following day the startling news was spread that the Duke of Orleans was assassinated.

In the evening he went out from the hotel of the Queen, mounted upon a mule, and followed by a feeble escort, when, near the Barquette gate, a troop of brigands threw themselves upon him, crying out "To death! to death!" and massacred him in the middle of the street. Terror reigned in the council, from which Burgundy was driven away; he saved himself in the states, then he returned, followed by an army, and openly proclaimed himself the murderer of his enemy. Already his crime seemed to be forgotten; the interesting Valentin

Rivalry  
between the  
Dukes of  
Orleans and  
Burgundy.

Assassination  
of the Duke of  
Orleans, 1407.

of Milan, widow of the assassinated prince, alone demanded vengeance; she was obliged to take to flight. John the Fearless was master in Paris, and he chose John Petit, a famous doctor in Sorbonne, to vindicate his crime before the whole court. John Petit maintained publicly that the Duke of Orleans was a despot, and that it was a duty of all men to kill tyrants. "This discourse appeared very strange to some of the nobles and priests," says a chronicler of the period, "but there was no one bold enough to speak against it except in secret." The murderer only consented at a later period to demand the pardon of the King and of the young princes of Orleans; peace was sworn between them at Chartres, and the bad faith of those who signed the treaty caused it to receive the name of the *Underhand Peace*. That same year, 1409, saw Genoa rise against the French, to whom it had been offered; the French were all driven from Italy.

Underhand  
Peace, 1409.

A slight calm succeeded these storms. But soon the members of the council, jealous of the ever-increasing popularity of the Duke of Burgundy, and disquieted about their own safety, quitted Paris, and rejoined at Gien the young princes of Orleans, of whom the eldest married the daughter of Count Bernard of Armagnac. This pitiless man, who was one of the most celebrated representatives of the great feudal system, became the chief of a party to which his name was attached. An army of ferocious Gascons marched under his orders, and threatened insurgent Paris, where John the Fearless caressed the vilest populace.\* Burgundy relied on the name of the King, whom he held in his

Civil War.  
Armagnacs and  
Burgundians.  
1410.

\* The reaction of 1385 had inflicted upon the high bourgeoisie wounds much more deep than those of 1359. The latter had simply struck at its political ambition, but the former had impoverished, dispersed, and deprived it of its lustre and its hereditary influence. The town of Paris, among others, perceived that it was declining in two ways: by the loss of its municipal franchises, and by the ruin of the families which had governed and given counsel in the days of its liberty. This lowering of the superior class, composed of the first merchants and the bar of the sovereign courts, had caused, in a degree, an intermediate class to rise—that of the richest of the men who exercised manual professions—a less enlightened class, grosser in manners, but to whom, however, the force of circumstances gave influence in the affairs of the city. From thence came the character of unshaken political power, which showed itself suddenly in the Parisian population when, in the year 1412, having recovered its franchises and its privileges, it was summoned by the communes to play a political part.—Augustin Thierry: *Essai sur l'Histoire du Tiers-Etat*, chap. iii.

power, and armed in the capital a corps of one hundred young butchers or horse-knackers, who, from John Caboche, their chief, took the name of *Cabochiens*. A frightful war, interrupted by truces violated on both sides, commenced between the party of Armagnac and that of Burgundy. Both sides appealed to the English, and sold France to them. The Armagnacs pillaged and ravaged the environs of Paris with unheard-of cruelties, while the *Cabochiens* caused the capital they defended to tremble. The States-General, convoked for the first time for thirty years, were dumb—without courage and without strength. The Parliament was silent, the university made itself the organ of the populace, and the butchers made the laws. They pillaged, imprisoned, and slaughtered with impunity, according to their savage fury, and found judges to condemn their victims.

Nevertheless, in the midst of such an anarchy, the commissioners of the town and of the university laboured at the reformation of the abuses exposed before the last States-General, and from their hands issued a code of reformed and wise laws—the first sketch of French judicial, administrative, and financial legislation, where the dominant idea was centralization, then so necessary.\* Very different from the

Celebrated royal ordinance of the 29th May, 1413, called the *Ordonnance Cabochienne*.

celebrated ordinance of 1357, equally dictated by the popular spirit, this one, with the exception of the election which it instituted for judicial offices, respected all the attributes of the royal power. Nevertheless, its principal clauses, which were declared inviolable, and presented as the fundamental law of the nation, only lasted a short time. The disorders which accompanied the publication of the new ordinance caused it to be discredited by honest citizens; it was nicknamed the *Ordonnance Cabochienne*. From that time it was condemned, and three months later it was annulled.

The demagogues pursued their violent course. They besieged in his hotel the Duke of Guienne, Dauphin of France; a popular orator, a surgeon, John of Troyes, overwhelmed him with reproaches and threats, and the favourites of the prince were massacred. The King, always a slave to the party which ruled near him, approved and

\* This celebrated ordinance, divided into ten chapters, treated of property, of money, of indirect taxation, of the treasuries during war, of the Chamber, of the Exchequer, of the Parliament, of justice, of chancery, of the woods and forests, and of the men-at-arms.



sanctioned without understanding all these excesses, which terrified even Burgundy himself. The reaction broke out at last. Tired of so many atrocities, the bourgeoisie took up arms, and shook off the yoke of the horse-knackers. The Dauphin was delivered by them. He mounted on horseback, and, at the head of the militia, went to the Hôtel de Ville, from which place he drove out Caboché and his brigands. The counter revolution was established. Burgundy departed, and the power passed to the Armagnacs. The princes re-entered Paris, and King Charles took up the *oriflamme* (the royal standard of France), to make war against John the Fearless, whose instrument he had been a short time before. His army was victorious. Burgundy submitted, and the treaty of Arras suspended the war, but not the ex-

Treaty of Arras  
between Charles  
VI and John  
the Fearless,  
1415.

Henry V., King of England, judged this a propitious moment to descend upon France, which had not a vessel to oppose the invaders. They disembarked without obstacle at the mouth of the Seine, and invested Harfleur, then a town of great maritime importance, commanding the entrance to the Seine, and one of the keys of the kingdom. France, with its mad King, and its court divided into hostile factions, was without government, and all co-operation against a foreign power was, at the outset, impossible. Harfleur, however, to which rushed a brave nobility, was valiantly defended, and only succumbed after a month of heroic defence. The inhabitants were set free on ransom, and expelled from the town; and the King resolved to make the conquered place a town altogether English, as was the case already with Calais. During the siege his army had suffered enormous losses, less by the sword than by disease; dysentery and fatigue had reduced it to one-half, and of thirty thousand men that he had brought before that place, not more than fifteen thousand remained. This number was insufficient to conquer the kingdom; and, on the other side, part of the French army under the Constable d'Albret, and under the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, began to unite together in Picardy. Henry, placing his hope in the slow movement of a divided enemy, believed that he had time to reach Calais by land, where he reckoned upon halting and receiving reinforcements.

Invasion of the  
English.  
Taking of  
Harfleur, 1415.

Notwithstanding the careful discipline observed by the English, the population, all French at heart, showed themselves hostile in all directions. They traversed the country of Caux, harassed and decimated, and directed their course towards the Somme, which they crossed. The French army, three or four times more numerous, awaited them on the other side of the river, near to the village of Agincourt. There occurred a battle similar to those of Cressy and Poitiers. The armies passed the night opposite to each other. On the side of the English,

Meeting of the  
armies near to  
Agincourt, 1415.

whose peril was imminent, everything, by order of the King, was said and done in subdued tones and in darkness. Amongst the French, on the contrary, great fires

Battle of  
Agincourt.

were lighted, and all was noise, agitation, and confusion. However, while the French thus awaited the perils of the morrow, they sundered the party hatreds which had for so long separated them, and mutually embraced each other with cordiality, each of them pardoning the offences of the other.\* They engaged in battle at break of day. The French cavalry, restricted by want of space, flung themselves pell-mell upon a soil moistened by rain, and, under a shower of arrows, rushed upon the sharp stakes which the English had planted. On seeing the ranks thus overthrown, the English issued from their fortified enclosure, and, having at their head King Henry V., penetrated to the middle of the second line of the enemy. The King of England had then run into great danger: twenty-eight noblemen had sworn an oath to join together near him, and strike the crown from his head, or to die in the attempt, as they did. They nearly pushed forward to the King, and one of them delivered so heavy a blow on his helmet that he struck off one of the ornaments of the crown; but they were surrounded, overpowered by numbers, and perished even to the last man. The rearguard of the French still remained intact, but seeing the first two ranks overcome, they hardly waited for the shock, but turned their bridles and fled. The battle was finished, when some one came to Henry V., and told him that the camp was attacked by a fresh army, and Henry, seeing the numerous prisoners that he had made, and for whom he expected heavy ransoms, ordered that all the captives should be put to death. The alarm was found to be false, but

\* Lefèvre: Saint-Rémi.

already nearly all had perished. Extended on the field of battle might be seen ten thousand French, nearly all nobles, of whom a hundred and five bore standards, and seven were princes, together with the Dukes of Nevers, Alençon, and Bar, and the Constable d'Albret. Amongst the few surviving prisoners were the Marshal of Boucicaut, the Counts of Eu, Vendôme, and Richemont, and the Dukes of Bourbon and Orleans. The conqueror King, master of the sad field, cast his eyes slowly around him, and having asked the name of a neighbouring château, a voice answered, "Agincourt." "Well," said he, "this battle will take the name of Agincourt, now and for ever." \*

Then, more terribly than ever, civil war broke out. The Count of Armagnac, appointed Constable, reigned in Paris by terror only; he caused a multitude of Burgundians to

*Course of the civil war.*

be drowned in the Seine, in which river he forbade the Parisians to bathe, in order to protect the secret of his murders. The Queen Isabeau of Bavaria alone could equal the authority of Armagnac; she was sent into exile by her husband to Tours. Burgundy took away the Queen from her guardians, and proclaimed her regent. A short time afterwards, a bourgeois of Paris, named Perinet le Clerc, delivered [up one of the gates of the capital to Isle-

*Perinet le Clerc takes Paris from the Burgundians, 1418.*

Adam, an officer of John the Fearless. The Burgundians entered into the town, from which place the Prévôt Tanneguy-Duchâtel carried off the young dauphin, Charles, the last and only surviving son of the King, enveloped in his bed-clothes. The populace rose again under the leadership of the executioner Capeluche: they seized the Count of Armagnac, with his partisans, and threw them into prison. On Sunday, the 12th of June, 1418, the murderers rushed to the prisons at the Temple, at Saint Eloi, and the two

*Massacre of the Armagnacs, 1418.*

Châtelets, and then the massacre commenced; on the following day it continued in the streets and houses in the midst of Paris, and the very pigs were fed on human flesh. The Constable had perished, one of the first, and the people took a hideous pleasure in gutting from his corpse a large strip of skin, in order to represent the scarf of the Armagnacs. The Queen Isabeau, brought back by the Duke of

\* Lefèvre: Saint-Rémi.

Burgundy, made her triumphal entry into the town sullied by so many horrors, and took in hand the sovereign authority. The faction of Orleans then conducted the Dauphin to Poitiers, and recognized him as regent. There were thus in France, in the midst of the calamities of a foreign war, two distinct governments more hostile to one another than the common enemy which infested the kingdom.

Henry V. pursued his ravages into the heart of the kingdom.

Progress of the  
English in  
France.

He had entirely conquered Normandy; Rouen also, notwithstanding the valour of its inhabitants, sustained by the heroic Alain Blanchard, had fallen into his

power. The French princes seemed at last to perceive the necessity of union. The Dauphin had appointed an interview with the Duke of Burgundy on the bridge of Montereau; the Duke, after hesitating for a long time, presented himself, and, as he bent the knee before the Dauphin, Tanneguy-Duchâtel struck him with an axe upon the head, and killed him before the eyes of his master. Thus died by assassination John the Fearless,

Assassination of  
John the Fear-  
less, 1419.

the assassin of the Duke of Orleans. This murder made peace impossible. Philip the Good, the new Duke of Burgundy, in order to avenge his father, offered the crown to Henry V., and the guilty Isabeau, unworthy queen and still more unworthy mother, negotiated between her unconscious husband and Henry V. the shameful treaty

Treaty of  
Troyes, 1420.

of Troyes, signed in 1420, by which, in contempt of the rights of the royal princes of France, the crown was

bestowed in perpetuity on Henry and his descendants. This treaty, which could not come into effect until the death of King Charles VI., was immediately sealed by the marriage of her daughter to Henry. The regency of the kingdom, during the malady of the King, was to be entrusted to Henry V., with the title of regent; and he swore that he would maintain the jurisdiction of the Parliament, as well as the rights of the peers, the nobles, the cities, towns, and communities of France, and to govern each kingdom according to its laws and customs. This treaty was received with favour by the Parisians, equally tired of the yokes of the Armagnacs and the Burgundians,

States-General  
of 1420.

and was solemnly approved of by the shameful States-General, convoked in the capital and presided over by

the King. But Henry V. took upon himself the task of destroying

the new people whom he ought to have governed, and it was through his cruelties that the heart of the French people was restored to the Dauphin. That young man, sixteen years of age, was declared guilty by the Parliament of homicide on the person of the Duke of Burgundy, and deprived of his rights to the throne. He wandered for a long time in the provinces of the south, flying before the English arms, over whom his generals obtained at Baugé, in May, 1421, a glorious but useless victory. The sudden death of Henry V., in 1422, prepared a new destiny for the Dauphin. Charles VI. died shortly afterwards; he had occupied the throne for forty-two years.

Victory of the French at Baugé, 1421.  
Death of Charles VI., and of Henry V., 1422.

With this deplorable reign ended the scandals of the Great Schism of the East. Innocent VII., then Gregory XII., had succeeded in Italy to Boniface IX. The anti-pope, Benedict XIII., still lived, and France remained neutral between him and his rival, until the cardinals of the two courts united together in common agreement and convoked, in 1409, the Council of Pisa, which deposed Gregory and Benedict, and proclaimed Alexander V. Alexander died, and was replaced by John XXIII. Lastly, the Emperor Sigismund convoked in 1414 the famous Council of Constance, at which there attended with him many princes of the empire, twenty-seven ambassadors of sovereigns, and a great number of prelates and doctors. The superiority of the general councils over the popes was there established by a celebrated decree; John XXIII., convicted of enormous crimes, was deposed, and the assembly, in choosing Martin V. to succeed him, considered him the only legitimate Pope. Gregory XII. had abdicated; the obstinate Benedict XIII. struggled to the death, and entrenched himself in his fortress of Peniscola in Spain.

Course and end of the Great Schism of the East.

Councils of Pisa and of Constance, 1409-1418.

The Council of Constance condemned the criminal doctrine professed by John Petit, the apologist of the crime of John the Fearless, and attempted to repair the immense injury which the schism had inflicted upon the Catholic religion; but the spirit of doubt and of examination penetrated into all quarters. Already John Wycliffe had preached a reform very boldly in England, and his disciples, called Lollards, multiplied every day. John Huss and Jerome of

Prague, other reformers, less bold than Wycliffe, fixed the attention of Germany. The Council of Constance caused them to be burned, notwithstanding the safe conduct which the former had received from the Emperor; it believed that it could stifle their heresy by their execution; it deceived itself. The principles established by the men did not die with them; violence and treachery only engender indignation, hate, and revolt. Soon the war of the Hussites broke out, and was the forerunning sign of the conflagration which, in the following century, caused the face of the Christian world to change.

No period was more sterile in great characters and more fruitful in scoundrels than the reign of Charles VI. Some men, however, acquired in France a reputation worthy of being transmitted with honour to posterity. Amongst these were the Chancellor of the University, John Gerson, who distinguished himself above all by his ardent and disinterested zeal for the extinction of the schism, and to whom is attributed, but without sufficient proof, the admirable book of the *Imitation*; the Advocate-General, John Desmarets, who was borne to the scaffold as an accomplice in the seditions to which, on the contrary, he had opposed the authority of his power; the magistrate Juvenal des Ursins, father of the historian of that name, intrepid in braving the fury of the nobles and in repressing their criminal violences; lastly, the great citizen, Alain Blanchard, who immortalized himself in the defence of Rouen, and lost his life in his devotion to France and to his King. The nation at this epoch did not honour itself by any useful invention; but at that time sprang into existence, amid streams of blood, playing cards and the dramatic farces of the Brethren of the Passion and the lawyers' clerks.

The gloomy picture of the crimes and misfortunes of France during the hundred and fifty years from the death of Saint Louis to that of Charles VI., fill the soul with horror and fear. It is, notwithstanding, fruitful in grave proofs that the frightful calamities had been drawn down upon their authors, whether they were monarchs, princes, nobles, bourgeois, or peasants, on account of so many acts of violence. The cruelty, the frauds, and the brutal despotism of some of the successors of Saint Louis,

Celebrated men.

John Gerson.

Juvenal des Ursins.

Alain Blanchard.

Moral consideration.

aroused the wars which desolated their kingdom and their lives; the nobility, assassins and assassinated, expiated with their own blood that which they had shed; lastly, the violence of the bourgeoisie as soon as it became powerful, the refusal of all personal sacrifice, and the horrible excesses of the *Jacquerie*, dishonoured and ruined the popular cause for a lengthened period of time. Centuries of misfortune taught the nation that which we ought never to forget; it taught them that a people cannot enjoy in peace the advantages of a great, strong, and free nation, until it knows how to understand those of union, of obedience to the laws, and of the sacrifice of particular interests to the general interest of the country.

## BOOK III.

FROM THE DEATH OF CHARLES VI. TO THAT OF  
LOUIS XII.

AWAKING OF THE NATION.—EXPULSION OF THE ENGLISH.—END OF THE  
HUNDRED YEARS WAR. — EXTINCTION OF THE GREAT FEUDAL  
SYSTEM IN FRANCE BY THE UNION OF THE DUCHIES OF BURGUNDY  
AND BRITTANY WITH THE CROWN.—FIRST WARS WITH ITALY.  
1422-1515.

## CHAPTER I.

REIGN OF CHARLES VII.

1422-1461.

THE Kings of France, while becoming more absolute, had lost, by the abuse of power, that which had in great part made their fortunes from the reign of Louis the Big to that of Saint Louis. The people, crushed by taxes arbitrarily established, pillaged by mercenary soldiers, and oppressed by the nobles, who constituted the principal force of the armies, ceased to look upon the cause of their sovereigns as their own, and withdrew from them their confidence and their love. This disaffection of the people showed itself in numerous revolts, and aided powerfully the rapid success of the foreigners in the heart of the country. The scourges which desolated France during a century and a half, and which shook the monarchy, were only suspended in the course of the last years of Charles V.; we have seen how they reappeared more terribly than ever during the long reign of his unfortunate son. At the end of that period the monarchy only existed in name, and appeared to be sinking in general dissolution. God, however, had better destinies in reserve for France.

State of France  
at the accession  
of Charles VII.,  
1422.



A central, energetic, and powerful authority was alone capable of striking the final blow at the feudal army; of maintaining in the body of the nation, in a durable manner, so many persons of different origin as they composed the kingdom; and of uniting to the crown the states which, between the Rhine, the Pyrenees, and the ocean, were still separated from it. The English themselves assisted in re-establishing the fortunes of France. The intolerable oppressions which they caused to be laid upon the vanquished, and the barbarity of their exterminating government, united against them all the oppressed. A national sentiment was thus created amongst those who were united under a common misfortune, and made the people turn anew with hope to the prince who had been proscribed by their tyrants, and who alone could rescue them from a hateful yoke. That prince was Charles VII. From his accession to the throne till the total extinction of the feudal power, during a century, the destinies of the royal power appeared to be newly connected in an intimate manner with those of the nation; and both went on increasing in strength and in power.

A blind chance does not preside over the destinies of the world. History, which has shown to us the progress—very slow, it is true, but real—of humanity towards a better order of things, proves sufficiently the existence of a providential action in the midst of the innumerable calamities which we excite by our passions and our vices. This action of divine goodness becomes apparent when it assures the triumph of an apparently despairing cause, and when the means employed to reach the end seem altogether deprived of power and strength. Such was the principal sign in which must be recognized the assistance that God deigned to lend to France after the signature of the fatal treaty of Troyes. On the side of the foreigners there had lately been seen a victorious monarch, in the prime of life, master of two-thirds of the kingdom, strong in the assent of the States-General, and in his close union with the King and Queen of France. However, Henry was no more; but still among the English party might be reckoned the greater part of the French princes, also the great vassals of the crown, the capital, and a numerous and well-organized army. On the other side there was to be seen a turbulent nobility, undisciplined captains, bands of

ferocious adventurers, who sought less to save the kingdom than to divide its spoils amongst them; lastly, a young prince of eighteen years, without strength of mind or character, stained with the suspicion of a great crime, disgraced by a decree of Parliament, abandoned by his father and his mother, and only reigning nominally over some provinces which were a prey to anarchy. But the safety and the destiny of France were attached to the triumph of his cause, and God certified it in a few years, contrary to all human foresight.

Catherine of Valois, daughter of Charles VI. and wife of Henry V., had brought into the world a son who succeeded his father in 1422, under the name of Henry VI.; he was then scarcely a year old, and was crowned at Paris as King of France and England.

Henry VI.,  
King of France,  
1422. The Duke of Bedford, eldest brother of Henry V., governed the kingdom in the name of his nephew, and knew how to attach to himself the two greatest vassals of the crown, John VI., Duke of Brittany, and Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. The latter, in order to avenge more surely his father's assassination, bestowed the hand of his sister on the Duke of Bedford, and was for a long period the firmest supporter of the English in France.

Situation of  
Charles VII. The Dauphin Charles, then nineteen years old, had taken, immediately after the death of his father, the title of King, and resided at Bourges with the Queen, Marie of Anjou, his wife. The remains of the Armagnacs, in the provinces of the centre and of the south-east, only recognized his authority, and the people, who still remembered the frightful excesses of that party, hesitated at first to declare in favour of the young prince, who was contemptuously designated by his enemies the *King of Bourges*. The soldiers of the army of Charles were for the most part foreigners, like those of Henry VI.; his army was composed of Scotch, and of ferocious Armagnacs or Gascons, for a long period subjects of England. His constable even, the Count of Buchan, was a Scotchman; and the King, surrounded by savage men, appeared for a long time to take as little interest as the people themselves in his own cause.

The battle of Crevant-sur-Yonne, lost by his troops, and that of

Verneuil, still more disastrous, where the Constable perished, caused Charles VII. to perceive the necessity of having powerful supporters. He fixed his choice upon the famous Richemont, brother of the Duke of Brittany, and

Battles of  
Crevant-sur-  
Yonne, and of  
Verneuil, 1424.

offered him the sword of the Constable. Richemont only accepted on condition that the Armagnacs should be driven from the court, and that Charles should separate himself from the assassins of John the Fearless. Tanneguy-Duchâtel, the most powerful and the most guilty, left the first, and hastened by his voluntary exile the useful bringing together of Richemont and the King. Freed from the faction which had held him in guardianship, Charles ceased to be looked upon as the instrument of a hateful party, and appeared to reign himself; but years had still to roll away before he was King in reality, and worthy of the devotion of his people.

Character of the  
King.

Without character and without will, incapable of any serious occupation, indolent and voluptuous, he was the plaything and the slave of his favourites, or of all those who obtained an ascendancy over his mind; and he forgot them as soon as chance or violence had separated them from him. He received successively from the hand of the Constable two favourites, the Lords of Giac and of Beaulieu: to each in turn he granted a blind and foolish confidence, and saw them without anger, one after the other, assassinated by that same Richemont who had placed them near him,

Violent acts of  
the Constable  
Richemont.

but to whom the confidence bestowed on them by the King had given umbrage. Richemont had given a third favourite to the King, the Lord of La Tremouille; but he also met with the fate of his predecessors, through getting out of favour with the Constable; and Charles saw with indifference his court and his nobility divided between the two rivals. He then lingered at Chinon in effeminacy and pleasures, while his party was weakening every day, and discord reigned in his camp. Already the English threatened Orleans, the most important of the towns still remaining faithful; they had made themselves masters of the head of the bridge and the outworks, notwithstanding the bravery of La Hire, of Xaintrailles, of Gaucourt, and above all of the famous Dunois, bastard son of Orleans, the last and powerless defenders of the French monarchy. Lastly, the defeat of the French and Scotch at

the battle of the Herrings \* appeared to give the finishing stroke to the fall of that town, and to inflict a mortal wound upon the cause of Charles.

Battle of the  
Herrings, 1429.

But in proportion with the new triumphs gained by the English, their yoke became more intolerable, and developed in the kingdom a national sentiment capable of working prodigies if it were set in action by hope and confidence. Religious enthusiasm mingled itself in the heart of the French, who, seeing in their misfortunes the chastisements of an avenging God, awaited the end of their sufferings from the divinity alone.

Such were, in 1429, the sentiments of the mass of the nation, when a young girl of twenty years, named Joan of Arc, born of poor parents in the village of Domremy, upon the frontiers of Lorraine, announced that she had received from God a mission to cause the siege of Orleans to be raised and to conduct the King to Reims to his coronation. She was beautiful, endowed with a noble and pure soul, and united much reason and humility to a great religious fervour. She was assured that interior voices had revealed to her the heavenly will, and requested to be led to Chinon to Charles VII. Brought into his presence, she distinguished him, it is said, upon the spot, among all his courtiers, and kneeling before him, she repented to him the order which she declared that she had received from heaven. Charles, whom she still called the Dauphin, caused her to be examined by prelates and matrons, in order to assure himself of the truth of her inspiration, and, on their report, placing faith in her word, he caused a complete suit of armour to be given to her. She wished to have a white standard sprinkled with fleurs-de-lis, and declared that in digging into the earth at Saint Catharine de Fierbois, near the principal altar, a sword bearing upon its blade five particular signs would be found. It was found there, and she made the sword her own. She did not wish to use it so as to kill any one, and she often said that although she loved her sword, she loved her standard forty times more. "I have

Vocation of  
Joan of Arc,  
1429.

Joan of Arc at  
Chinon.

\* This battle received its name from a convoy of salt fish sent by the English to those who were besieging Orleans. The French artillery broke open the casks in which the fish were contained, and the field of battle was strewed with herrings.

seen her," wrote one who lived at that period, "armed at all points, and all in white except the head, mount upon a great black steed, and then turn to the door of the church, which was near, saying in a feminine voice—"You, the priests and people of the church, cause processions to be made, and offer up prayers." Then she turned again to her path, saying, '*Press forward, press forward!*' And she had her standard folded up, and carried by a handsome page, and bore her little battle-axe in her hand." \* The report soon spread among the two armies that a being endowed with supernatural power had come to fight for Charles VII.; and whilst the French saw divine intervention in this prodigy, the English, stricken with terror, only wished to recognize in it the influence of the demon.

For her first exploit Joan, notwithstanding the strict blockade, conducted into Orleans an army which had left Blois. Orleans delivered by Joan of Arc, 1429. "In five days," said she, "Orleans will be free." The English had encircled the town with formidable fortifications; almost all of these were carried by assault by the besieged. One only resisted, that of Tournelles, a veritable citadel, where the enemy had concentrated all his forces. The French generals had decided that they would wait till they received reinforcements before they commenced the attack, and signified their resolution to the heroine. She answered,—“You have held your council, but the council of my Lord will be accomplished, while that of men will perish.” She carried along with her the people of Orleans, and the soldiery followed by impulse. However, after three hours of terrible fighting, the assault was repulsed, and the retreat sounded. Joan was wounded, and fell at the foot of the parapet, but she raised herself, and going aside into a vineyard remained for a quarter of an hour in prayer. Then she rushed out anew, seized again her standard, and planted it upon the fortress, and in an inspired voice cried out, “All is yours! enter within.” Consternation and fear had seized the defenders; their chief, Glasdale, perished with the *élite* of his soldiers, and the French penetrated into all parts of the conquered fortification. Joan, at the head of the people and of the army, re-entered

\* This letter, written by Guy de Loyal, from the place which he held at the court, is one of the most precious monuments of the period, and one of the most perfect models of wit and of chivalric loyalty in the fifteenth century.

Orleans in the evening, to the sound of the ringing of bells and amid cries of triumph and joy from the delivered city. \*

Suffolk and Talbot, the English generals, had been witnesses of this astonishing reverse, without daring on their side to attempt anything to prevent it. They held a council, and raised the siege on the same night. From that time Joan, under the name of the Maid of Orleans, soon became celebrated throughout the whole kingdom; France awoke, enthusiasm gained men's hearts, and a crowd of soldiers rushed to join the standard of Charles, while Bedford saw his English seized with fear. Places on the banks of the Loire, Jargeau, Meun, and Beaugency, were speedily taken; everywhere the English fell back; at last Joan and her army met them at Patay, in the plains of Beauce.

Awaking of  
France.

Defeat of the  
English at Patay,  
1429.

La Hire and Xaintrailles, who led the advance-guard of the French, immediately charged the enemy without permitting them to entrench themselves; the latter were at once thrown into disorder, and the victory was gained by the main body of the army. In vain Talbot surpassed himself; by his obstinacy he only rendered his defeat more sanguinary. Joan of Arc triumphed over that famous captain; and then, as on other occasions, she compassionated the sufferings of the conquered, caused the succour of religion to be brought to the wounded, while she herself bestowed her pathetic care upon them.

After this glorious battle, Joan of Arc went to find the King at Gien, and conjured him to march boldly upon Reims, there to cause himself to be crowned, and solemnly to take possession of his kingdom. Charles allowed himself to be persuaded, and advanced across Champagne with his army. Troyes, situated upon the road to Reims, closed its gates. It was in this town that the last treaty, so humiliating for France, had been signed, and they feared the vengeance of the King. The besiegers were short of provisions, the country round about was all ruined, everything appeared desperate. The council of war wished to raise the siege, but Joan presented herself; the internal voices, she said, had assured her that within two days the town would give itself up.

Joan of Arc  
conducts the King  
to Reims.

\* A fête was instituted in honour of the raising of the siege, and celebrated on the 5th of May, every year, at Orleans.

The event followed the prediction: on the following day the town capitulated. Charles VII. went over the town in the grand panoply of war, and then pursued his march. Châlons opened its gates to him, and he arrived at last under the walls of Reims, at the glorious end of his journey. The Burgundian captains who commanded the town evacuated it without giving battle. Charles, on the 16th of July, made his triumphal entry, and he was crowned in the ancient cathedral. The Maid of Orleans placed herself near to the King and the principal altar during the ceremony, standing erect with her standard in her hand. Her mission was accomplished.\*

Coronation of  
Charles VII.,  
1429.

After the coronation, Joan embraced the knees of the monarch, and said to him, "Gentle King, now is the pleasure of God executed. He desired that you should come to receive your coronation worthily, by showing that you are the true King, and he to whom the kingdom ought to belong. I have accomplished that which was commanded of me, which was to raise the siege of Orleans, and to cause the King to be crowned. I would now wish to go back to my father and mother, to take charge of their sheep and cattle." These simple and touching wishes were not heard favourably; the captains of Charles had recognized in Joan their most powerful auxiliary, and they prayed that she would remain with them. She consented with regret, but showed still the same courage in action, although not the same confidence in herself. She was wounded at the unfortunate siege of Paris, and lastly taken prisoner in a sortie, whilst heroically defending Compiègne, which the English and Burgundians attacked together. John of Luxembourg, commander of the siege, sold her to the English for ten thousand livres, and the Regent Bedford caused a solemn *Te Deum* to be sung on that occasion. Then party spirit exhibited itself in its most hideous form. In the rage into which the English lashed themselves against the

Joan of Arc  
prisoner of the  
English.

\* The King recognized the immense services which it had pleased God to render to his cause through the feeble hands of a woman. He ennobled all the family of Joan of Arc in perpetuity, and, by a unique but perfectly comprehensible exception, it was said that nobility transferred itself to this family through females. Joan obtained a short time afterwards the sweetest and purest of recompenses, by the royal edict which exempted for ever from the land-tax the villages of Greux and Domremy, where she was born and where she had passed her infancy.

woman who had made them tremble, can be recognized that merciless feeling, the resentment of fear and of humiliated self-respect.

Delivered over to the Inquisition, as suspected of magic and sorcery, the unfortunate girl was shut up in the dungeons of Rouen, and there was found a Bishop of Beauvais, Pierre Cauchon, who, altogether devoted to the English by vengeance and ambition, lent to their fury his shameful ministry. The trial commenced: infidelities, atrocious threats, and sacrileges, everything was used in order to consummate the sacrifice of an heroic virgin; and while the civil power and the ecclesiastical authority leagued together to convict Joan of imposture and alliance with the devil, she opposed to the subtleties of theology and the plots hatched by a merciless hate, the inspirations of a most open conscience, the lights of a righteous and superior reason, which confounded her enemies themselves. It was to God that she attributed all her successes. The bishop asked her if she was in a state of grace. Joan said, "If I am not, God wishes to put me into that state; if I am, then God wishes that I should remain so." When interrogated as to her words and acts in the battles, she answered, "I said, Go boldly among the English; and I went myself."—"Does God hate the English?" asked the bishop.—"Of the love or of the hate that God has for the English," she said, "I know nothing; but I know that, with the exception of those that die here, all will be driven out of France."—"Was her hope fixed in her standard or in herself?"—"It is founded in our Lord, and not otherwise."—"Why did she carry the standard before the King to Reims?"—"It had been in trouble," she said, "and it was right that it should be held up to honour."

So much reason and good sense did not affect her judges; they had declared that God could not wish Charles VII. to triumph; after that, the demon alone had inspired Joan. They condemned her to be burnt alive.

On the 31st of May, 1431, she was led to the place of execution, dressed in a long black robe. She forgot neither her King, nor France for which she died; she prayed for them, and requested the prayers of all the assistants, and pardoned her enemies. Her youth, her tears, and the Christian words which fell from her lips, drew tears even from English eyes, and

Trial of Joan of  
Arc.

Death of Joan of  
Arc at Rouen,  
1431.



filled the minds of her judges with terror. The trouble caused by this frightful spectacle was such that the civil sentence was not even pronounced. "Lead her on! Lead her on!" said the affrighted bailiff to the executioner. The soldiers dragged her away and bound her to the post, the infamous mitre of the Inquisition was placed upon her head, and then the flames brightened. "Jesus!" she cried, and pressed to her heart a wooden cross; then she asked earnestly that the crucifix from the neighbouring church should be brought to her; she kissed with fervour the image of the Just One who was sacrificed for sinners, of the Man-God who died for the salvation of the world; she invoked his name, she invoked all the angels of Paradise, where the saints had promised to conduct her. Perhaps then she understood at last the true sense of their prophetic words: "Joan, Joan, take all things patiently," said the voices, "and have no care for your martyrdom; you will be delivered by a great victory." That victory was the last which broke her fetters and opened up to her heaven. "Jesus!" she cried again, in the midst of the flames; then she bent her head, and breathed forth her innocent soul and her last sigh.

Charles heard of her death with indifference; he did nothing to prevent it or to avenge it, and waited for twenty-five years before ordering that the memory of the heroine should be reinstated. He had again fallen into his culpable indolence. His favourite, La Tremouille, had drawn him away from warlike pursuits, and in order to preserve his ascendancy, kept him at the Château of Chinon by the attraction of fêtes and pleasures. Charles, surrounded by his mistresses, failed again in his fortune, while his captains fought separately, as chiefs of partisans; they received from him no order, no pay, no support, and submitted the country where they ruled to frightful exactions. The English, however, were still more odious to the people; in vain Bedford, in order to hold the capital, called within its walls the young King Henry VI., and caused him to be crowned; in vain he deposed himself from the title of regent in order to bestow it on a French prince, the Duke of Burgundy; the English and their allies the Burgundians were equally detested, and insurrections broke out in all parts of the kingdom.

The most skilful of the captains of Charles, the Constable Richemont, fell into disgrace, was restored to favour, and commanded

the army. About the same time, in 1435, Bedford, brother-in-law of the Duke of Burgundy, died, and his death broke the ties of that duke with England. Burgundy sacrificed at last his long resentment to the interest of France, and became reconciled to Charles VII. He was exempted from all vassalage during his life; the King ceded to him the counties of Auxerre and Mâcon, with other places. He promised, besides, to disavow the murder of John the Fearless, to deliver up its authors, and to grant an amnesty to all those of his subjects who had taken up arms against him. On these conditions Philip swore to forget the past, and signed with his cousin an offensive and defensive alliance in the town of Arras. The French were united, and the maintenance of the English dominion became impossible. Paris, after belonging to the crown of England for seventeen years, opened her gates to her King, and soon the English only remained in Normandy and Guienne.

An extraordinary and complete change was effected in the mind of Charles VII., and the honour was, in part, to be attributed to his mistress, Agnes Sorel. A will full of energy had taken the place of his indolent indifference; his frivolity was changed into prudence and wisdom, and his voluptuous tastes no longer excluded him from an active perseverance in warlike and political affairs.

The French, since the union of Charles with the Duke of Burgundy, began to enjoy some repose; but then, as in the time of Charles V., at the end of the long civil wars, bands of mercenaries, without pay and without employment, infested the kingdom. The captains of Charles VII., and amongst them the celebrated La Hire and Xaintrailles, for a long period accustomed to make war on their own account and without discipline, continued, in despite of the treaty of Arras, to pillage Burgundy, and gloried in the name of *Ecorcheurs* (horse-flayers), which the hatred of the people had bestowed on them. Charles repressed their disorders, and wished to prevent their recurrence. With this object he undertook a wise measure, which contributed powerfully to the peace of the interior and to the strengthening of the royal authority. After having convoked the States-General at Orleans, he asked and obtained from them a tax of twelve hundred thousand

Treaty of Arras,  
1435.

Awaking of  
Charles VII.

States-General at  
Orleans, 1439.

livres for the pay of a permanent army. This tax was destined for the support of fifteen hundred men-at-arms, each of whom was to be followed by five men on horseback, a page, a cutler, and three archers. The King divided them into fifteen privileged companies, which he disseminated through all parts of the kingdom; each being entrusted with the charge of its own garrison. On their part, the soldiers could not separate without leave, and each captain was responsible for the pillages and violences of his men, who were to be in submission to the jurisdiction of the bailiffs and the *prévôts*. The pay for a man-at-arms and his suite was fifteen livres per month. Some years later Charles completed the organization of the permanent army, by compelling each parish to furnish, at the call of the King, a good infantry soldier fully equipped, and on whom the military service conferred several privileges, high pay, and exemption from taxes. These foot soldiers were called free archers.

Organization of  
a permanent  
army, 1439.

This reconstruction of the military system produced immense results; the King thus obtained an army always numerous and always ready to run down in mass upon all points menaced by revolt or war. He caused the *élite* of his captains and soldiers of adventure to enter it; while terror restrained those who could not be admitted. To the States-General of 1439 must be attributed, in fact, the merit of this creation, for it was by them that the first necessary funds were granted; however, they had only granted the tax of twelve hundred thousand livres for one year; the King on his own authority made it perpetual. Thus was established in France, illegally, the direct permanent tax. Nevertheless, the people paid without murmuring. Besides, Charles VII. by his ordinance had only made regular a state of things which already existed. The levy of troops had not been interrupted, and the prospect of being delivered from the pillage of the soldiery was an immense relief to the dwellers in the country. The perpetual tax was *personal* or *real*, according to the different provinces; that is to say, either established on all the revenues of the tax-payer or only upon his landed property. At first it was popular, but there were bad readjustments of the impost, its amount was always increasing, and above all the innumerable immunities admitted later on in

Perpetual tax,  
1439.

favour of the privileged classes rendered it hateful throughout the whole kingdom.\*

Crimes of every description multiplied in a fearful manner; the King gave to the *prévôt* of Paris, Robert d'Estouteville, full power to judge and condemn every person convicted of any crime whatsoever. The Parliament, whose rights were forgotten, kept silence; all liberty was stifled, and the kingdom given over to a despotic power. The people had suffered too long for want of government; they had passed through a horrible anarchy, and felt the want of a central and vigorous authority. Commerce sprung up again, agriculture became flourishing, and the King was hailed as the restorer of order.

However, the military aristocracy could not see, without uneasiness, the progress of the royal power. It made an insurrection which was called *Praguerie*.† In this revolt it was necessary to have chiefs; the Dauphin, who was afterwards Louis XI., the princes of royal blood, and the captains of the *Ecorcheurs*, offered themselves. They seized several towns and fortified places, and wished to recommence a civil war; but the times were changed. Charles VII., at the head of a disciplined army, marched against the rebels, who one after the other submitted. One only remained formidable, and that was the prince who was heir to the crown. He retired into Dauphiné, and from that time a deep enmity existed between father and son.

After having pacified the interior, Charles VII., profiting by the civil wars which were exhausting England, tried to expel the enemy from the kingdom. Two great provinces, Guienne and Normandy, were still under the foreign yoke. In a year, half of the fortified places in Normandy were reconquered. The Duke of Somerset, who continued to bear the title of Regent of France, vainly endeavoured to defend Rouen against the army of Dunois. In the following year the Constable Richemont and the Count of Clermont gained a

\* Refer for the taxes in France to Chap. III.; and further on, under Charles VII., to the establishment of the Court of *Aides*.

† The name of *Praguerie*, which was given to this revolt, came from Prague, a town in Bohemia, then famous throughout Europe for its seditions during the war of the Hussites.

sanguinary victory at Formigny, between Carentan and Bayeux. That battle decided the fate of the war; all the towns in Lower Normandy revolted; Cherbourg was taken, and the entire province, with its two capitals and its hundred fortresses, was again united to France. Guienne alone belonged to England. It was soon conquered by the victorious army; but as soon as the expedition terminated, the English reappeared, and Bordeaux in receiving them within its walls, rendered a new campaign necessary. Talbot, then eighty years old, commanded the English; he attacked the French army before Castillon, which he besieged: a cannon-ball carried off both the old hero and his son. Their deaths were the signal of a complete defeat. The town was given up; then Libourne, and lastly Bordeaux, opened their gates. Guienne was for the future French; and of all its continental possessions England only preserved Calais. The hundred years war was finished, and a long period of internal quarrels and calamities commenced for England in the madness of Henry VI., who had just married the heroic and ambitious Margaret of Anjou.

Victories of the French at Formigny and at Castillon. Expulsion of the English, 1550-1553.

A truce had suspended the hostilities between the English and the French, when the Emperor Frederick III. requested the support of France against the republican cantons of Switzerland. The assistance of Charles VII. was equally solicited by René, Duke of Lorraine, against the free town of Metz and against Toul, Verdun, and some other towns, which called themselves subjects of the empire. Charles VII. complied with these requests and sent two armies, one into Switzerland and the other into Lorraine. The Dauphin Louis commanded the first, which was composed of men of all nations, and of a band of adventurers, compelled to be so through the inaction caused by the treaty with England. This army met that of the Swiss Cantons at Saint Jacques, near Bâle. The Swiss were then the best infantry in Europe. They were armed with long pikes, which they wielded with as much strength as skill; they had gained great victories for a century over the chivalry of the empire. They advanced with fury against the advance-guard of the French army, and threw it into disorder; but having ventured

Campaigns of the French in Switzerland and Lorraine, 1444.

Battle of Râle, or Saint Jacques, 1411.

imprudently to attack the main body of the army, they were in their turn repulsed and broken up. The Dauphin, struck with their bravery, made peace with them, in spite of the Emperor and the empire; he desired to attach the Swiss to himself, and concluded an alliance with those whom he had vanquished.

The events of the campaign in Lorraine were little decisive. The towns of Toul and Verdun recognized the King as their protector; Metz resisted, was besieged, and bought the maintenance of its liberty by a contribution of war. This rapid campaign gave a proof of the pretensions of Charles VII. upon a portion of Lorraine, but there was no other important result.

The wounds of France closed, and prosperity began to spring forth anew. The King had taken up the tradition of the government of his grandfather Charles V.; by his care the whole administration was reformed. After the ordinances upon the military state, there

Reforms in the  
administration.

appeared the ordinances concerning the accounts of the treasury, the assessment of the land-tax, and the rendering of accounts.

Royal decrees.

A special court was then instituted for every civil and criminal trial connected with the taxes; this supreme jurisdiction, called the *Court of Aides*, had soon

numerous tribunals. To this prince also belonged the honour of having commenced the regulation of the Customs. Until that time,

Court of Aides.  
Regulation of  
the Customs.

throughout the north of France, then called the country of Customs, justice was only dispensed according to a legislation which was not written. By the creation of

the Parliament of Toulouse the King restrained the jurisdiction of that of Paris, which then extended itself throughout the provinces.

Under the following reign, several other parliaments were instituted, one of which, held at Grenoble, replaced the Delphic court. After

having organized the army, the treasury, and justice,

New Parliaments.

Charles occupied himself with the Church of France.

It was he who, in 1438, promulgated solemnly, before the French clergy assembled at Bourges, the Pragmatic Sanction,

Pragmatic  
Sanction, 1438.

proclaiming the liberties of the Gallican Church, such

as the council then sitting at Bâle had defined. It recognized the superiority of the General Councils over the Pope, restricted to a small number the cases of right to appeal to Rome, forbade the

publication of papal bulls in the kingdom before being registered in Parliament, deprived the pontifical court of the revenue of vacant benefices, and entrusted the election of the bishops to the chapters of the churches.

In these works, which were so important and so diverse, the States-General had only a feeble part; their last meeting had taken place at Orleans, in 1439, and for twenty-two years Charles did not convoke them; instinctively he hated these assemblies, guilty, in his eyes, of having favoured the troubles of the preceding reign, and of having sanctioned the shameful treaty of Troyes; but Charles was seconded in his work by skilful counsellors, who, for the most part, had been drawn from the ranks of the bourgeoisie. The two most illustrious were John Bureau, master-general of ordnance, Jacques Cœur. and Jacques Cœur, rendered as much celebrated by his prosperity as by his misfortunes. By commercial speculations in Europe and Asia, Jacques Cœur had acquired immense wealth, with which he generously supported the credit of Charles VII. That prince ennobled him, and named him his treasurer; it is to him that all the financial reforms of that period are to be attributed. But the avaricious courtiers coveted his fortune and came between the King and him. His wealth was soon seized and divided amongst those who had been appointed his judges, and amongst them was to be seen the man who succeeded him in his office. Accused of embezzlement, and deprived of all means of defence, Jacques Cœur was condemned without proof, and banished from the kingdom.

Charles had become the wisest and the most powerful monarch in Europe, but just causes of distrust and resentment with regard to the Dauphin embittered his latter years. Louis, who had married first, Margaret of Scotland, had secondly espoused, contrary to the wish of his father, Charlotte, daughter of the Duke of Savoy. The King ordered him to come and justify himself at his court, where the Count of Dammartin, an enemy of the prince, was all powerful. The Dauphin, fearing all the counsellors of his father, and not being able to obtain surety for his person, thought at first to resist with open force, and assembled troops; but, soon convinced of his powerlessness, he took to flight, and sought refuge in the court of Burgundy, where he was received by Philip the Good and by Charles his son with honour and munificence.

*Flight of the  
Dauphin into  
Burgundy.*

The King soon took possession of Dauphiné, caused all the revenues to be seized, and united that province to the states which were held directly from the crown. The Dauphin had implored the pardon of his father, but the King knew his false and perverse heart, and vainly requested that he would ask for pardon verbally; unfortunately, a formidable example had recently increased the distrust of his son. The Duke of Alençon, prince of the blood royal, was accused by the King of treason and of complicity with England. The peers of the kingdom convoked for his judgment condemned him to death. Charles commuted the punishment, and caused the prince to be shut up in the tower of the Louvre; the Dauphin declined to expose himself to a similar chastisement. The King, from that time, believed that he lived in the midst of the emissaries of his son and of their ambushes. Lastly, fearing that he would be poisoned by them, and suffering besides from an abscess in the mouth, he refused all nourishment and allowed himself to die of hunger. He expired on the 22nd of July, 1461, in his fifty-eighth year.

Death of Charles VII., 1461.

Some years before the death of this prince there was accomplished on the banks of the Bosphorus the grand catastrophe which terminated the Middle Ages. Already Bajazet, conqueror of the Christians at Nicopolis, had twice encamped before the gates of Constantinople. The invasion of the Mogul Tamerlane into the Asiatic possessions of the Turks, and the famous battle of Agora, where Bajazet fell into the hands of the new conqueror, alone saved the Greek empire, or at least retarded its fall for half a century. Mahomet II. achieved the work which his predecessors had attempted. At the head of an army of 250,000 men he besieged by land and by sea that illustrious capital. The cry of distress of the Greeks was not heard in Christendom, which was then divided by schisms, by revolts, and by wars. Constantinople at length succumbed, and its last emperor, Constantine, perished, buried beneath its ruins, in 1453. Greece, Epiria, Bosnia, and Servia were conquered; the Isle of Rhodes alone, defended by the brave knights of Saint John, escaped from the infidels.

State of Europe at the end of the Middle Ages.

At the moment when the Turks had established themselves in Europe in order to remain there, the popedom, after an absence of seventy years, which the historians of the Church called the captivity of Babylon, returned



to Rome ; but it saw its spiritual prestige weakened by the scandals of the schism, and its temporal power incessantly shaken by the conspiracies of the Roman nobility and the seditions of the populace. Italy.

For a long time the republics of Lombardy, deprived of their ancient glory, had been the prey of their powerful neighbours or their ambitious citizens. Milan, the most illustrious, bent its head under the Visconti, to whom succeeded the Sforza. Florence, on its side, crushed by the quarrel of the *Whites and Blacks*, descendants of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, was by degrees subdued by a race of opulent merchants and patrons of art, the famous Medici. Genoa and Venice disputed the empire of the sea, and exhausted themselves by that rivalry. Naples, lastly, was conquered under the second House of Anjou by Alphonso V., King of Aragon and of Sicily, who received from the Pope, in 1473, the investiture of that new kingdom.

The Iberian peninsula, where the Moors still held the kingdom of Grenada, was divided into many small states, which Spain and Portugal. were always at war with one another—Portugal, Castile, Navarre, and Aragon. This latter kingdom commenced to predominate ; it extended itself to the exterior by conquests, and, uniting itself with Castile by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, it soon formed the true kingdom of Spain.

In the north, England, which Henry V. at the commencement of the century had raised to so high a fortune, exhausted England. itself under an imbecile king and a haughty queen to preserve its conquests by sea, while, in the heart of the country, already the germs of the terrible Wars of the Roses fermented.

In Germany, the wars of the Hussites inundated Bohemia with blood. The Emperor Sigismund had succeeded the ignoble Vanceslas, but he was powerless in trying to Germany and Hungary. extinguish the fire which the funeral pile of John Huss had kindled ; and the fierce Taborites,\* commanded by Zisca, the terrible blind man, and by the Procope, only succumbed, after twenty years of struggle, under their own blows. Sigismund died in 1437, and the imperial crown, which encircled the head of Albert, already King of

\* The name of Taborites was given to the Hussites on account of a mountain in Bohemia, where their camp was established, and which they had called Tabor.

Hungary and Bohemia and Archduke of Austria, went no longer to the House of Hapsburg.

France was at peace, but she groaned under a multitude of torments and abuses. The new day which had already enlightened Italy commenced, however, to penetrate into the kingdom. French poetry had acquired grace and harmony: the lyrical verses of Charles of Orleans, the prisoner of Agincourt, and of King René of Anjou, obtained a merited reputation. Among the poets of that time may be reckoned Oliver of La Marche, Alain Chartiers, historiographer of France, and lastly, François Villon, who introduced the burlesque style. These men would without doubt have contributed to give to French poetry a national stamp if the greatest event of the fifteenth century had not turned their minds in another direction. The taking of Constantinople disseminated throughout the whole of Europe the literary wealth of Greece and Rome, and the powerful genius of antiquity placed his yoke upon the almost newly-born genius of modern literature.

Commerce and industry also about this period made happy progress in France as well as in the rest of Europe. The requirements of nations were better known; they knew the value of the different productions, and the extent of their consumption in each country; men who were well informed and possessed of large capital could establish factories in all places of merchandise, and embrace Europe and Asia in commercial speculations. It was in this manner that Cosmo of Medicis at Florence, and Jacques Cœur, acquired their riches. Lastly, the time approached for the great discoveries which were about to make the second half of the fifteenth century famous, and to which the darkness of preceding ages gave still more brilliancy.

"It is the distinctive character of this epoch," says an eminent historian, "that it was employed in order to convert primitive Europe into modern Europe; in this consists its importance and historical interest. If we did not consider it from this point of view—if we only sought, above all, what came from it, we should not only misunderstand it, but should leave it promptly. Seen by itself, in fact, and in part of its results,

State of letters  
under Charles  
VII.

Progress of  
commerce and  
industry.

General consid-  
erations.

it is a time without character, a time when confusion went on increasing without any one perceiving the causes—a time of movement without direction, of agitation without results. Royalty, nobility, clergy, and bourgeois, all the elements of social order, seemed to turn in the same circle, equally incapable of progress or rest. They made attempts of all kinds: all failed; they tried to settle governments; to establish public liberty; they tried even religious reform: nothing was done—nothing was finished. If ever the human race appeared devoted to an agitated yet stationary destiny, to a ceaseless yet fruitless work, it was from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. . . . . Considered, on the contrary, in its connection with that which followed, this period is bright and animated; we can discover in it a harmony, a direction, and a progression; its unity and its interest lie in the slow and concealed work which was accomplished in it.”\*

\* Guizot's *Histoire Générale de la Civilisation en Europe*.

## CHAPTER II.

## REIGN OF LOUIS XI.

1461-1483.

LOUIS XI. was thirty-eight years old when he mounted the throne.

Policy of Louis  
XI.

His reign formed an epoch, not only by the considerable extension which the kingdom obtained under him and by the strengthening of the absolute power of the monarch, but also on account of the new tendency of European policy and of the powerful impulse which the character of Louis was able to impress upon it. The art of negotiation was up to that time almost unknown; the sovereigns, governed by their blind and violent passions, always sacrificed to the present the interests of the future, and force decided everything. Policy, however, began to be for them an object of serious study. Louis was the first who converted diplomacy into a system. Endowed with a subtle and astute mind, he made this art the study of his whole life, and contributed more than any other to the substitution in politics of the power of intelligence for the authority of force. But he misunderstood all the principles of morality, and to his contempt for them was falsely attributed the greater part of his success. The policy which rests upon perfidy is as fruitful in calamities as that which only recognizes brutal violence as law. The custom which caused Louis XI. to deceive always, often became fatal to him; and he was indebted for the greater part of his advantages over his enemies neither to his falsehoods nor his treacheries. He triumphed over all, because he knew how to comprehend his true interests, to understand men, to appreciate merit and to use it, and because, embracing in his projects the future and the present, he submitted them nearly always to the calculations of reflection and of consummate prudence. Finally, it may be said that he drew upon himself

his reverses by his vices, and that he obtained his most brilliant successes by his intellectual qualities, when allied with wholesome morality.

Feudalism had regained all its power during the long anarchy of the preceding reigns, and Charles VII. himself, while <sup>Situation of</sup> he held in respect the Dukes of Brittany and Burgundy <sup>France.</sup> and the Count of Anjou, the great vassals of the crown, did not obtain from them any pledge of obedience. The houses of these three princes vied with the royal house in power and in splendour. That of Burgundy was mistress of Burgundy, of Flanders, of the Low Country and of the Free County, and was the richest in Europe; that of Anjou, which had lost the throne of Naples but had acquired Lorraine by marriage, possessed, besides, Maine and Provence, and enclosed the domains of the King in its vast possessions. The south groaned under the tyranny of the counts of Albret, of Foix, of Armagnac, and of a crowd of other noblemen who, for the most part, exercised a despotic and absolute power throughout their lands. The feudal system was then the greatest obstacle to the tendencies which drew together the people who inhabited the same soil, and to the healthy progress of national sentiments; it had become at last the scourge of Europe, which it had saved in the tenth century. The glory of striking it a mortal blow belongs to Louis XI.

This prince, who from being a fugitive became a king, was informed of the plots hatched against him in the court of his father, and also of the hatred which the most influential men in the kingdom bore him, and, according to the expression of a celebrated writer, he only saw in the opening of his reign the commencement of his vengeance.\* He believed that he had need of the support of the people against his enemies, and promised at his accession to diminish the taxes and to submit the national charges to the approval of the States-General. But <sup>First acts of</sup> his liberalities towards those whom he wished to gain <sup>Louis XI.</sup> exhausted the treasury; the taxes were augmented, and the States-General left in oblivion. Some insurrections broke out, but Louis knew how to suppress them. One of the first acts of his reign was the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction, which he decreed in

\* Montesquieu.

hatred of the institutions of his father; at the end of his life, however, he re-established the principal dispositions. Another ordinance, apparently of futile interest, profoundly irritated the nobility. The King, passionately fond of the chase, and jealous of his pleasures as of his authority, forbade that sport in the royal forests; and soon after he added to this edict others which afforded new grounds for discontent. Economical himself, and strict in the administration of finances, he did not permit them to be pillaged by the princes of his family. His yoke bore equally upon all; his active vigilance surveyed at the same time each part of the kingdom, and he would not suffer any tyrant in the country but himself.

The irritation became general; the princes wished for apanages which would render them independent; the nobles demanded dignities and gold: they wished back with all their hearts the anarchy of Charles VI., and leagued themselves against Louis XI. He, in seeking to divide his two most formidable neighbours, Francis II., Duke of Brittany, and the Count of Charolais, son of the Duke of Burgundy, excited them against himself. He had perfidiously given to both of them the government of Normandy, in the hope of seeing them dispute; however, they united together against him. The resentment of the Count of Charolais was, however, more vehement because Louis had been loaded with benefits by Philip the Good, his father. This count, who was afterwards Charles the Rash, and one of the most powerful sovereigns in Europe, offered a striking contrast to Louis XI. Violent and untamable, always governed by pride or anger, he showed himself during the whole of his life the most ardent and the most terrible enemy of the monarch his sovereign.

League of the  
Public Good,  
1465.

It was around him and the Duke of Brittany that the princes of the royal blood rallied, together with the great nobles who were discontented, in the number of whom must be reckoned those who had obtained more glory under the late King, and who had served him better—Dunois, Saint Pol, Tannegny-Duchâtel, and Antoine of Chabannes, Count of Dammartin. They gave to their league the name of the *League of the Public Good*, and placed at their head the Duke of Berry, Charles of France, brother of the King, who claimed Normandy from him as an apanage. The bloody battle of Montlbery, where

Battle of Mont-  
lbery, 1465.

Louis left the field of battle to the Count of Charolais, was soon followed by the rising of Normandy in favour of the princes.

The King, seeing himself the weakest, laid down his arms and had recourse to negotiations. No one possessed better than he the art of gaining hearts by insinuating and flattering words. He feigned to stifle his just anger, to forget all his injuries, and signed the treaty of Conflans, by which he gave Normandy to his brother, and satisfied the exorbitant pretensions of the princes.

*Treaty of  
Conflans, 1465.*

Louis ceded to them towns, vast domains, and governments, and piled up dignities upon the rebel nobles. Saint Pol was named Constable. But Louis only gave with one hand to take back with the other when the moment should arrive. He studied his enemies, and from that time his principal care was to gain at any price the most skilful, and to divide the others and crush them separately. It was thus that he attached to himself the Duke of Bourbon and many ministers of his father, among others the Chancellor, Juvenal des Ursins, and the celebrated Count of Dammartin. He needed the support of the nation, and convoked the States-General at Tours in 1468; however, he only had recourse to the people when

*States-General of  
Tours, 1468.*

he knew that they would have no other will than his own. Louis opened the States in person; and the Chancellor, after having pointed out to the deputies "the great wish which the monarch had always and had still of augmenting and increasing the kingdom and the crown," spoke strongly against the enemies of the nation, who had caused the King's own brother to serve as an instrument for their ambition, and only sought to enfeeble the State by dismembering it. Louis was obeyed; never did States show themselves more docile. They annulled, according to the wish of the King, the treaty of Conflans, retaking Normandy from Charles of France, and declaring that the prince ought to consider

*They annul the  
treaty of Con-  
flans.*

himself satisfied with his income of twelve thousand livres, fixed by Charles VII. as the apanage of the princes of the blood royal. Louis, having obtained from them all that he wished, was anxious to dismiss them. They only remained in assembly for eight days; and it was remarked, as a symptom of the progress of the bourgeoisie, that the three orders had voted in common. This was the only convocation of the States-General under this reign. Louis XI. distrusted public liberty quite as much as feudal power.

Charles of France, irritated at losing Normandy, united again with the Duke of Brittany and with Charles the Rash, who had become Duke of Burgundy by the death of Philip the Good, his father. All three treated with England against France, and invited King Edward IV. to transport an army into the kingdom. Louis foresaw their attack; he marched unexpectedly against the Duke of Brittany, who, separated from his allies, and, seized with fear, submitted by the treaty of Ancenis.

The King then sought to gain over his people; he gave charters to many of the towns, protected commerce by wise ordinances, and reorganized the national militia of Paris, composed of all the men between sixteen and sixty, of whom he made a list; it numbered eighty thousand men, arranged under sixteen banners, and was placed in possession of the right to elect its own officers. Louis endeavoured afterwards to find allies in the states of his most powerful enemy. The rich, populous, and manufacturing towns of Flanders were prompt to revolt against the cruel violences of the Duke of Burgundy, their sovereign. Ghent, Bruges, and Liège were distinguished amongst them for their power and their energy in seeking after liberty. Louis sent an emissary into the latter town, already irritated against the bishop, its sovereign prince, allied with Charles, and excited it to revolt, promising his support. In the meantime, in order the better to deceive the Duke and to lull his suspicions, he demanded from him a safe-conduct, obtained it, and, trusting too much to his own seductive manners, he went close to his enemy at Péronne. Scarcely had he arrived when the revolt of Liège broke out. Charles learnt that the populace had given itself up to the most horrible excesses; that the bishop, Louis of Bourbon, his relation and his ally, was massacred, and that Louis XI. was the author of the sedition. At this news his rage knew no bounds; he held the King prisoner, and threatened to kill him. Louis submitted to everything in order to get out of his peril; he signed the treaty of Péronne, which took away from him all sovereignty in the states of Burgundy, and gave to his brother Champagne and Brie as an apanage; lastly, he offered to the Duke to march in person, against the revolted inhabitants of Liège. On these conditions he was freed; but first, he was witness of the ruin of

New league of  
the Princes.

Treaty of An-  
cenis, 1468.

Treaty of Pé-  
ronne, 1468.



that unfortunate town which he himself had incited to rebellion; he saw a part of its inhabitants massacred, and felicitated Charles on his frightful triumph.

England was then desolated with the war of the *Two Roses*.\* Louis XI., having taken the side of the red rose, united against Edward IV., with his relative Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry VI., and with the famous Earl of Warwick, surnamed the *King-maker*. Edward, conquered, retired to Holland, and implored the assistance of Duke Charles, his brother-in-law. Louis, without anxiety on the part of England, followed up his advantages. He convoked an assembly of the principal inhabitants, whom he took care to choose himself, says Comines, from those who would not contradict his wishes; and he caused the treaty of Peronne to be annulled by them, under the pretext that Charles had only imposed it upon him by causing him to break his word. Louis, in disengaging himself from his obligations, created for himself new dangers. Edward IV., assisted by Charles the Rash, had retaken his crown; Henry VI. and his son were assassinated; the Duke of Burgundy called into France the English monarch, and promised Marie, his daughter and heiress, to Charles of France, Duke of Guienne, who had recently received that province from Louis XI. as an apanage. The Duke of Brittany renewed his intrigues; and the Constable Saint Pol sold his services to the two parties, seeking to raise himself at the expense of one or the other.

The principal inhabitants annul the treaty of Peronne, 1470.

New dangers to Louis XI.

The King thus saw himself threatened with a new storm, when his brother fell ill, and died after some months of suffering. Louis was accused of poisoning him, and did not deny it, and his memory is stained with the crime. The Duke of Burgundy soon caused his troops to march into Picardy, massacred the inhabitants of the town of Nesle, and spread terror before his steps. But the admirable defence of Beauvais, where Jeanne Hachette immortalized herself by her courage, arrested his army, while the King negotiated separately with each of the rebellious

Sudden death to his brother.

\* This name was given to the Civil War because the two houses which contended the throne, those of York and Lancaster, both issuing from Edward III., bore in their coat of arms, the first a white rose, and the second a red rose.

princes, and attached to himself by his liberality the two cleverest men of their party, the Lord of Lescun, favourite of the Duke of Brittany, and Philip de Comines, confidant of the Duke of Burgundy.

The manœuvres of Louis spread division among the chiefs of the league: the Duke of Brittany signed a new truce, and the Duke of Burgundy marched against the Constable Saint Pol, who had seized on his own account the town of Saint Quentin. The King took advantage from that moment of every opportunity to crush some of his enemies. He caused the Duke of Alençon to be tried and condemned to death,

Vengeance of  
Louis XI.

for the second time, by the Parliament of Paris. The

Cardinal La Balue owed his fortune to Louis XI., and had betrayed him; he was shut up in an iron cage, eight feet square, invented by the Cardinal himself, and there he remained a prisoner for ten years. Lastly, Cardinal Albi, John Goffredi, formerly Bishop of Arras, and a famous inquisitor in Flanders, where he had perpetrated atrocious barbarities, was ordered by the King to punish the guilty Count of Armagnac, one of the supporters of the League of the Public Good, and who, in marrying his own sister, had added incest to all his other crimes. Besieged in the town of Lectoure, he gave himself up to the Cardinal, who had promised him safety for his person, and who caused him immediately to be stabbed before the eyes of his wife, who was *enceinte*; he caused her to be poisoned; and the dreadful Goffredi, wishing to exterminate every witness of his perjury, gave orders that all the inhabitants of Lectoure should be massacred, and the town itself given up to the flames.

Edward IV., King of England, drawn over by the Duke of Brittany, was then in France with a numerous army; Charles, his ally, seconded him badly, and the English remained isolated in the kingdom. Louis XI., always more prompt to negotiate than to fight, gained over by his bribes the confidence of Edward, and was prompt in signing with him a truce of nine years. The King gave

Mercantile  
truces, 1475.

seventy-five thousand crowns, ready money, to Edward,

and engaged to pay sixty thousand every year until a projected marriage between the Dauphin and the daughter of the English monarch could be accomplished. Charles, abandoned by the English, also signed with Louis a truce for nine years. Each of these two enemies sacrificed on that occasion those on whom his

adversary wished to take vengeance: Charles delivered to the scaffold the Constable Saint Pol; Louis abandoned his ally, René, Duke of Lorraine, whose inheritance Charles the Rash coveted. Contemporaries saw a matter of traffic only in these two truces, and they were called the *Mercantile Truces*.

Sovereign of the duchy of Burgundy, of the Free County,\* of Hainaut, of Flanders, of Holland, and of Gueldre, Charles wished, by joining to it Lorraine, a portion of Switzerland, and the inheritance of old King René, Count of Provence, to recompose the ancient kingdom of Lorraine, such as it had existed under the Carolingian dynasty; and flattered himself that by offering his daughter to Maximilian, son of Frederick III., he would obtain the title of king. Deceived in his hopes, the Duke of Burgundy tried means to take away Lorraine from the young René. That province was necessary to him, in order to join his northern states with those in the south. The conquest was rapid, and Nancy opened its gates to Charles the Rash; but it was reserved for a small people, already celebrated for their heroic valour and by their love of liberty, to beat this powerful man. Irritated against the Swiss, who had braved him, Charles crossed over the Jura, besieged the little town of Granson, and, in despite of a capitulation, caused all the defenders to be hanged or drowned. At this news the eight cantons which then composed the Helvetian republic arose, and under the very walls of the town which had been the theatre of his cruelty they attacked the Duke and dispersed his troops. Some months later, supported by young René of Lorraine, despoiled of his inheritance, they exterminated a second Burgundian army before Morat. Charles, vanquished, reassembled a third army, and marched in the midst of winter against Nancy, which had refallen into the hands of the Swiss and Lorraines. It was there that he perished, betrayed by his mercenary soldiers, and overpowered by numbers. His corpse was found naked and pierced with wounds, lying in a frozen pool; and the people learned with transports of delight that they were freed from a tyrant as cruel as he was formidable.

Conquest of  
Lorraine by  
Charles the Rash,  
1476.

Battles of Gran-  
son and of  
Morat, 1476.

Death of Charles  
the Rash before  
Nancy, 1477.

\* The imperial county of Burgundy had acquired by its strong position in the mountains a kind of independence, from which came the name of the Free County.

At this news Louis immediately seized the duchy of Burgundy, and many fortified towns on the Somme, on the pretext that they were masculine fiefs, and he claimed the guardianship of the daughter of Charles, Mary of Burgundy. His cruelty excited him in proportion as his security increased. The Duke of Nemours, of a younger branch of the Armagnacs, formerly an accomplice of his enemies, was his prisoner. The King caused him to be tried by the Parliament, to which he added commissioners enriched beforehand with the spoils of the unfortunate Duke. Nemours was condemned to death, and Louis ordered that his children should be placed upon the scaffold during the execution of their father and be sprinkled with his blood. He caused them afterwards to be thrown into dungeons, where they were subjected to horrible tortures.

Execution of the  
Duke of Ne-  
mours.

The perfidy and ferocity of the King raised all the new states which he had seized against him. Soon a powerful enemy threatened him. This was Maximilian of Austria, recently united to Mary of Burgundy, and who claimed her heritage. The bloody and indecisive battle of Guinnegate, given in 1479 by the French to the Flemish and Burgundian troops of Maximilian, was followed by a long truce; and four years later, on the death of Mary, young Marguerite of Austria, her daughter, then two years old, was promised to the Dauphin. The treaty of Arras, concluded by Louis with the states of Flanders and the Emperor, confirmed to him the possession of the duchy of Burgundy, of the Free County or county of Burgundy, and the counties of Mâcon, Charolais, Auxerre, and Artois.

Battle of Guin-  
negate, 1479.

Treaty of Arras.  
Reunion of the  
two Burgundies  
and of Artois  
with the crown,  
1482.

Old René of Anjou, sovereign of Lorraine and Provence and titular King of Naples, had died a few years before. This prince, whose goodness, generosity, and love of fêtes had gained for him the name of "Good King René," had for a long period abdicated the ducal crown of Lorraine in favour of René, the son of his eldest daughter. He left by will the rest of his estates to his nephew Charles of Maine, the last male scion of the second house of Anjou. He only survived his uncle a short time; he died without children, and bequeathed his domains in France and his rights to the crown

of Naples to Louis XI., who had already obtained from the King of Aragon, as a pledge for a loan of two hundred thousand crowns, Roussillon and Cerdagne.

Reunion of the states of the second house of Anjou with the crown, 1481.

However, the King was growing old, and trembled at the thought of dying. After having deceived every one, he sought to deceive himself. Free from the cares which politics had given him, he appeared to be consumed by a fierce and gloomy melancholy. Shut up in his château of Plessis-lez-Tours, his ordinary residence, dreading the approach of his confidants and the members of his family, he redoubled his precautions and executions. Ten thousand mantraps were disseminated through the avenues of the château, round which wandered unceasingly the grand prévôt, Tristan the Hermit. Every suspected man was hanged or drowned without trial. Scotch archers watched on the walls and struck fatally all those who approached within reach of their arrows; and, while the neighbourhood of the royal residence resounded with the cries of so many victims, the monarch, whose fanatical devotion equalled his cruelty, multiplied his pilgrimages, despoiled his people in order to enrich the churches, caused relics to be brought at great expense from all parts, and prayed to God and the saints to prolong his miserable life. The Virgin, above all, was the object of his particular worship; he invented for her the prayer called the *Angelus*; he created her Countess of Boulôgne; and he did not meditate an act of perfidy or cruelty without having implored her assistance first. He was the first who bore constantly the name of *Very Christian*; and no man showed more clearly to what aberration a superstitious faith separated from all morality will lead. No oath was sacred for him unless it had been taken under the cross of Saint Lô, which, he believed, had been made from a piece of the true cross. His strange superstitions were those of his time, when it was generally supposed that certain practical externals of devotion were sufficient to efface the most enormous crimes.

Terrors and superstition of Louis XI.

This King, so much dreaded, had joined to the crown Berry, the apanage of his brother, Provence, the duchy of Burgundy, Anjou, Maine, Ponthieu, the counties of Auxerre, of Mâcon, Charolais, the Free County, Artois, Marche, Armagnac, Cerdagne, and Roussillon.\* He survived the greater

Acquisitions of the crown under this reign.

\* The seven latter provinces did not yet remain irrevocably united with France: one

part of his enemies, and when the tomb had closed over those who could have destroyed his work, God, whom he had so much offended, did not permit him to enjoy it. He died on the 30th of August, 1483,

leaving the sceptre to his young son, Charles. This child had excited his suspicions. Louis had left him in ignorance in order that his ambition, which he feared, might be less dangerous; and he only taught him one single sentence of the Latin language, which was a faithful *résumé* of his policy:—

Qui nescit dissimulare nescit regnare.\*

France was indebted to Louis XI. for many wise institutions, nearly all created with the design of centralizing the action of power and beating down the remainder of the feudality. To attain this end, he tried to establish in the kingdom uniformity of customs, and of weights and measures; he created posts, establishing on the great roads couriers, solely destined to carry public news to the King, and to carry his orders; he replaced the corps of free archers by Swiss corps, and some privileged companies by a Scotch guard. Louis XI. instituted three new parliaments, at Grenoble, Bordeaux, and Dijon. The most remarkable edict of his reign is that which declared judicial offices to be held for life. That edict founded the independence and the power of the parliaments, but was not inspired, however, by love of justice; for no one more often than Louis XI. had recourse in his criminal trials to commissions and to illegal and violent means. Under his reign legislature became a science; the schools acquired new life, and letters obtained a consideration which they had not enjoyed up to that time.

Louis sought for a long time, but in vain, to gain the hearts of the people by the simplicity of his manners and the familiarity of his conversations with men of humble condition. He was more hated than any of his contemporary princes; not that they were much less perfidious or cruel, but they appeared to commit evil by a blind and brutal instinct, while Louis was ferocious in cold blood, and submitted crime to calculation. Jealous of all superiority, he placed round him

part was given anew in apanage, and the other part restored to foreign sovereigns, and only returned one by one to the Crown of France.

\* "He who knows not how to dissimulate knows not how to reign."

only obscure men. John Cottier, his physician; Olivier le Dain, his barber; and Tristan the Hermit, the grand prévôt, whom he called his gossip,—these were his confidants. There had not been a great man during his reign; but history has preserved to us the beautiful answer addressed to the King by the first president, John de la Vaquerie. That magistrate, considering that a royal edict was contrary to the public welfare, presented himself before Louis XI. at the head of his corps. "What do you wish?" said the King to him. "The loss of our offices," answered La Vaquerie, "and even death, rather than betray our consciences."

Printing, which was about to change the face of the world, was invented in Germany during this reign. That invention, of which many countries dispute the honour, is generally attributed to John Gutenberg, of Mayence. Louis XI., at the request of two theologians, caused the first French printing press to be established at Sorbonne. He gave encouragement to scholars, founded universities, and opened many schools of law and medicine. The learned Philip of Comines, who lived for a long time in his intimacy, was the historian of his reign.

Louis XI. also protected commerce, created manufactories for precious stuffs, respected the value of the coinage, and permitted the nobles to devote themselves to commerce without derogating from their position; but, although he lived without pomp, and exercised towards himself a sordid parsimony, he exhausted his kingdom by gifts to those whom he wished to gain, to corrupt, or to maintain faithful. The taxes, which only rose in the time of Charles VII. to eighteen hundred thousand livres, were raised under his successor to four millions seven hundred thousand, a prodigious sum for a time when public credit did not exist, and when agriculture, commerce, and industry, the sources of public wealth, were still in their infancy.

The principal work of Louis XI. was the abasement of the second feudality, which had raised itself on the ruins of the first, and which, without him, would have replunged France into anarchy. The chiefs of that feudality were, however, more formidable, since, for the most part, they belonged to the blood royal of France. Their powerful houses,

Invention of  
printing.

Schools.

Commerce and  
industry.

Raising of the  
taxes.

Abasement of  
the nobles under  
Louis XI.

which possessed at the accession of that prince a considerable part of the kingdom, were those of Orleans, Anjou, Burgundy, and Bourbon. They found themselves much weakened at his death, and dispossessed in great part, as we have seen in the history of the reign, by confiscations, treaties, gifts, or heritages. By the side of these houses, which issued from that of France, there were others whose power extended still, at this period, in the limits of France proper, over vast domains. Those of Luxembourg and La Marck possessed great wealth upon the frontier of the north; that of Vaudemont had inherited Lorraine and the duchy of Bar; the house of La Tour was powerful in Auvergne; in the south the houses of Foix and Albert ruled, the first in the valley of Ariège, the second between the Adour and the Pyrenees. In the west the house of Brittany had guarded its independence; but the moment approached when this beautiful province was to be forever united with the crown. Lastly, two foreign sovereigns held possessions in France: the Pope had Avignon and the county Venaissin; and the Duke of Savoy possessed, between the Rhone and the Saône, Bugey and Valromey. The time was still distant when the royal authority would be seen freely exercised through every territory comprised in the natural limits of the kingdom. But Louis XI. did much to attain this aim, and after him no princely or vassal house was powerful enough to resist the crown by its own forces, and to put the throne in peril.



## CHAPTER III.

## REIGN OF CHARLES VIII.

1483-1498.

CHARLES VIII., son and successor of Louis XI., mounted the throne at the age of thirteen years. He had two sisters, of whom the eldest was married to the Lord of Beaujeu, of the house of Bourbon. She had intellect, and certain traits of the character of her father, who had preferred her to his other children, and had specially charged her and her husband to direct the new King. Jeanne, his youngest, not favoured by nature, was married to her cousin the Duke of Orleans. Charles had passed a part of his solitary youth in the château of Amboise, where long illnesses had deformed his body. Kept by his father in profound ignorance of everything, he did not know how to fix his attention on anything. Incapable of application and of discernment, and feeling his weakness, he lived for a long time in guardianship, though he was fully of age when his father died, having attained his fourteenth year.

Anne of Beaujeu, profiting by the influence which long custom had given her over her brother, preserved the guardianship of his person, and took possession of the power conjointly with her husband. This authority was soon disputed by the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, and the Count of Clermont, all three princes of the blood royal and chiefs of the feudal reaction. The first was heir presumptive to the throne, and the second eldest brother of the Lord of Beaujeu. At last, in order to put an end to their dangerous rivalries, with one accord the States-General were convoked at Tours. The deputies separated themselves into six com-  
 mittees under the name of the "Six Nations," France (Ille  
 de France), Burgundy, Normandy, Aquitaine, Languedoc, and Langue-  
 doil (centre province), and showed themselves in most respects  
 worthy of the States of 1356 under King John. They laid their

States-General of  
1484.

hands on all abuses, described all the reforms, and invoked the ancient French constitution, which, however, was only written in the hearts of men, and existed only in name. The order of the clergy demanded the liberties of the Gallican Church, contrary to the wish of the bishops; the nobility claimed anything that could restore to it its ancient military importance; the third estate solicited the abolition of *prévôtal* justice, the diminution of the costs of law, the moderation of the tolls, and the surety of the roads; then, presenting the picture of the miseries of the people, it entreated the King to reduce the expenses, and above all to abolish the land-tax (*taille*), affirming that the inhabitants of many of the districts of France had fled to Brittany or to England. "Others," they said, "were dead of hunger; others in their despair had killed their wives and children and then themselves; lastly, a great number who had been robbed of their cattle were themselves harnessed to the waggon with their children; many, in order to escape the seizure of their oxen, only dared to labour in the fields by night."

Louis XI. had stretched his jurisdiction too strongly, and the reaction broke out in every part. The whole of France, by the mouth of its deputies, demanded a return to the government of Charles VII. Emboldening themselves by degrees, the States dared to deliberate on the opportunity of a permanent council of guardianship, taken from their midst, to be charged with the direction of affairs in the name of the King.\* However, when threatened by the princes, the States grew weak, and committed themselves to the wisdom of the infant prince to grant their requests. They named the Duke of Orleans president of the council, gave the second place to the Duke of Bourbon, constable, and gave the third to the Lord of Beaujeu; they decided that the

\* It was in the course of this discussion that an orator, the Lord of La Roche, deputy of the nobility of Burgundy, pronounced the following words:—"Royalty is an office, not an inheritance. It was the sovereign people who originally created kings. The state is the affair of the people; sovereignty does not belong to princes, who only exist through the people. Those who hold the power by force, or in any other manner, without the consent of the people, are usurpers of the rights of another. In case of minority or incapacity, public affairs return to the people, who retake them as their own. The people—that is, the universality of the inhabitants of the kingdom, the States-General—are the depositaries of the will of the kingdom. An act could only take the force of law by the sanction of the States; nothing is holy, nothing solid, without their approval."—*Journal des Etats-Généraux*.

States alone had the right to tax the people, ordered reductions in the army, and voted a tax of twelve hundred thousand livres for two years, declaring that at the expiration of that period it would be necessary to convoke them anew, in order to arrange that the tax should be kept up. They established these principles without taking any of the guarantees necessary to cause them to be observed. Soon the discussions degenerated into shameful quarrels concerning the redivision of the land-tax in the provinces. Profiting by these divisions and the lassitude of the deputies, the princes promised everything for the King, and hastened to dismiss the States. No promise was kept, and none of the wishes expressed heard favourably.

The Duke of Orleans, a young prince less occupied with business than pleasure, was soon removed by his sister-in-law, Anne, from the council, of which the deputies had named him president; and the kingdom was governed by a woman, who held her title to power neither by the wish of the States nor the laws of the kingdom. Anne of Beaujeu governs the kingdom. The wisdom and vigour with which this princess employed the royal authority caused the people to forget that she had usurped it; but a league was formed against her, composed of the princes of the blood royal: at their head League of the Princes, 1435. figured the Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, the Prince of Orange, Philip de Comines, and the Count of Dunois, son of the famous bastard of that name, and the most skilful negotiator of his century. These confederates, less guilty in having struggled against the usurpation of the regency than in opening the kingdom to foreigners, called to their aid Maximilian of Austria, and Francis II. Duke of Brittany.

That province was a prey to anarchy. The old Duke Francis II., nearly imbecile, reigned only in name. He had given all his confidence to the son of a tailor named Landais, whom he had made his treasurer and favourite. The nobles of Brittany, irritated by the tyrannical yoke of this *parvenu*, were leagued together against him and against their duke. Anne of Beaujeu, always acting in the name of the King, made an alliance with them. She united herself in a similar manner with René of Lorraine and the Flemings, who had revolted at this period against Maximilian of Austria, their sovereign.

Richard III., of the house of York, then reigned in England.

Tutor to his nephews at the death of Edward IV., he had commenced by contesting their birth, and then caused them to be killed. The Dukes of Orleans and Brittany united themselves with this monster, and for the price of his assistance engaged to deliver up to him Henry of Richmond, a prince of the royal race, and avenger of the Lancastrians, who was then taking refuge on the continent. Anne of Beaujeu supported this prince, and furnished him with troops, with which he disembarked in England. Soon the battle of Bosworth,

End of the War of the Two Roses in England.

where Richard III. perished, assured the throne to his rival. Henry of Richmond, grandson of Owen

Tudor and Catherine of Valois,\* was recognized King of England in 1485. He had married Elizabeth of York, and thus

Accession of the House of Tudor, 1485.

reunited in person the rights of the two families between whom the kingdom had been divided for so many years. The Wars of the Two Roses, or of the

houses of York and Lancaster, ended at his accession to the throne. About the same time the Breton nobles triumphed. They seized Landais in the very chamber of their sovereign, who delivered him up while asking for mercy; it was in vain: Landais was condemned to death and executed, and the feeble Francis II. approved of the sentence.

Anne of Beaujeu profited skilfully by the success of her allies.

Civil war in France, 1496.

She subdued the south, and took Guienne away from the

Count of Comminge, who had embraced the side of the princes. The latter were in consternation. Dunois reanimated their courage; he addressed many princes far distant from one another, to whom he gave hopes of gaining the hand of the daughter of the Duke of Brittany, heiress of the duchy. It was thus that he flattered one by one, and drew over to or maintained on his side, Alain d'Albret, the Lord of Béarn, Maximilian of Austria, recently elected King of the Romans, and the powerful Viscount of Rohan. However, Anne caused her brother to summon to the throne, in the Parliament of Paris, the leagued princes and the principal nobles of their party. They did not appear; and in the month of May following a sentence was issued by which Count Dunois, Lescun, Count of Com-

\* Catherine, after the death of Henry V., had married, a second time, a Welsh gentleman named Tudor, a descendant on the female side from the third son of Edward III., John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.

minge, Philip de Comines, the Lord of Argenton, and many other nobles, were condemned as being guilty of high treason against the King. No sentence was pronounced against the princes.

Anne followed up her advantages. She entrusted the royal army to La Trémouille, who marched into Brittany and met the army of the princes near to Saint Aubin du Cormier. Marshal de Rieux, the Lord d'Albret, and Chateaubriand commanded it; the Duke of Orleans and the Prince of Orange were in its ranks. They engaged in battle; it was gained by La Trémouille, and prepared the way for the union of Brittany with France. The Duke of Orleans, the Prince of Orange, and a great number of nobles were taken prisoners. The conqueror invited them to his table, and when the repast was finished two Franciscan monks entered the saloon. The guests were struck with stupefaction: La Trémouille rose and said, "Princes, I send back your sentence to the King; but you, knights, who have broken your faith and falsified your oath of chivalry, you will expiate your crime with your heads. If you have any remorse in your consciences, here are two monks to confess you." The saloon resounded with sobs; the knights, supplicating, embraced the knees of the princes, who, seized with horror, remained immovable. The condemned were led out into the courtyard and put to death. The Duke of Orleans and the Prince of Orange were led back into France, where Anne held them prisoners. The treaty of Sablé, concluded in the same year, suspended hostilities between France and Brittany.

Battle of Saint  
Aubin du  
Cormier, 1487.

Treaty of Sablé,  
1487.

The Constable, the Duke of Bourbon, was dead; his brother, Lord of Beaujeu, had inherited his title and all his power. Anne, who had become Duchess of Bourbon, lived after the battle of Saint Aubin du Cormier in possession of an authority which ceased to be contested. This princess had had for a long time in view the union of Brittany with the crown. No project could be more useful to the kingdom, which was constantly in peril through the independence of that great fief. A few months after the signature of the treaty of Sablé, old Francis II. died. Charles VIII. claimed the guardianship of his daughters, of whom Anne, the eldest, was scarcely twelve

Death of the  
Duke Francis II.  
Different parties  
in Brittany,  
1488.

years old. While princes and powerful nobles disputed her hand, many parties were formed in Brittany, where the different aspirants called for assistance from the English and Spaniards. The latter, sent by Ferdinand of Aragon and by the celebrated Isabella of Castile, opposed the pretensions of the Lord d'Albret, who was supported by the English. All were leagued against France, but very much weakened through anarchy. Such was the state of affairs in the duchy, when, in 1490, the young Anne of Brittany, in order to escape from her persecutors, consented to marry the King of the Romans, Maximilian of Austria. That prince was absent, and the marriage was only celebrated by procuration. Deceived in his hopes, the Lord d'Albret betrayed the Bretons, and sold to Charles VIII. the town of Nantes, of which he was the governor. The King obtained new advantages, and soon after surprised Rennes, where the Duchess was, and carried her off. Then was seen accomplished a strange fact in the annals of history. Anne of Brittany and Charles VIII. were married, the former to Maximilian, and the latter to Marguerite of Austria, eleven years old, daughter of the same Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy; but neither of the two marriages had been consummated. Both one and the other were annulled by the Church, and Charles VIII. married, in 1491, Anne of Brittany, who ceded to him all the rights of sovereignty, engaging herself, if she became a widow, to marry only the heir to the kingdom. In the following year Charles VIII. promised solemnly to respect the privileges of the Bretons; he swore that he would not raise any subsidy from them without the consent of the States of the province, that no Breton should be called into judgment except before the judges of his country, and that there should be no appeal from the Parliament of Brittany, which they called *The Great Days*, to the Parliament of Paris, except in cases of denial of justice or false judgment.

Charles VIII.  
marries Anne of  
Brittany, who  
cedes to him her  
rights of sovereignty  
over her  
duchy, 1491.

Charles, who was twenty-two years of age, was then the most powerful sovereign in Europe. Since the preceding year he had thrown off the prudent guardianship of his sister. The first act of his authority was to set at liberty the Duke of Orleans, whom she held a prisoner in the tower of Bourges, and on whom he heaped

proofs of his tenderness and confidence. He soon abandoned himself to his chivalric ideas, and dreamed of distant enterprises and conquests. In order to facilitate the execution of his adventurous projects, he hastened to conclude with the principal sovereigns of Europe onerous treaties, by which he sacrificed some of the most precious acquisitions of his father. Maximilian of Austria, whose wife he had carried off and whose daughter he had repudiated, contemplated a startling vengeance. Charles VIII. appeased him by giving up to him, by the treaty of Senlis, the counties of Burgundy and Artois. The King of England, Henry VII., whom he had assisted in conquering his kingdom, repaid him with ingratitude, and, having obtained large subsidies from his people in order to make war against France, he besieged Boulogne with an army. Charles obtained peace by recognizing, in the treaty of Etaples, a debt of seven hundred and forty-five thousand gold crowns, payable to that avaricious monarch, who, according to the expression of the great Bacon, his historian, made his people pay for war and his enemies for peace. He lastly gave up, in the same hope, by the treaty of Barcelona, to Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, vanquishers of the Moors, and conquering in Grenada, the counties of Roussillon and of Cerdagne, dearly purchased by Louis XI. In peace with the neighbouring states and with his people, Charles VIII. saw himself able to satisfy his passion for distant adventures and chivalrous conquests. Brought up in ignorance of men and things, possessing no historical instruction, incapable of all calculation and of all foresight, he had only nourished his intelligence by reading romances of chivalry, and gave himself up to no other exercises than those of jousts and tournaments. His imagination, warmed by the recital of the exploits of Charlemagne and of the Norman knights, persuaded him that he was called upon to follow their example. He thought, they say, of conquering Constantinople; but bounded his ambition at first with Italy and Sicily.

Concessions of  
Charles VIII.  
to foreign  
sovereigns.

Treaty of Senlis,  
1493.

Treaty of  
Barcelona, 1493.

For a long time Italy had excited the cupidity of the French. The successive pretensions of the two houses of Anjou had called over, since the time of Saint Louis, in each generation, swarms of French or Provençal adventurers to that beautiful country. These who did not

fall, returned covered with brilliant armour made in Lombardy, or with sumptuous stuffs from Florence. They boasted of the delights of a splendid climate, of the exquisite wines of the South, the wonders of industry and luxury, and of all the wealth that had tempted them. This beautiful country seemed an easy prey to seize, in the midst of the decadence and servitude of all Italy. Venice alone, with its 3,000 vessels, its army of condottieri well paid and well disciplined, its industry flourishing, and its terrible constitution, the safeguard of its liberty, remained independent and formidable, extending its territories from the frontiers of Carniole almost to those of Switzerland.

State of Italy at  
the end of the  
15th century.

The kings of France had never lost sight of Italy; Louis XI., among others, sought to obtain rights over it: it was at his instigation that the old King of Naples, René of Anjou, designated as his heir Charles of Maine, his nephew, to the prejudice of René II., Duke of Lorraine, son of his eldest daughter. Charles of Maine, on taking the title of King of Naples, named Louis, in his turn, his sole heir. This will was the only title on which Charles VIII. rested his pretensions to the crown of Naples and Sicily, then possessed by a prince of Aragon, Ferdinand I., son of Alphonso the Magnanimous.\*

There was always in the kingdom of Naples a party favourable to the house of Anjou, and which was called the *Angevin* party. It was composed for the most part of barons who had revolted against the atrocious tyranny of Ferdinand. They appealed, uselessly, to René of Lorraine to come into the kingdom; in place of him they addressed themselves to Charles VIII., and offered to him the crown. This prince had still another supporter in Italy. Louis the Moor, son of the great Francesco Sforza, was all-powerful at Milan. He had made

\* The Queen of Naples, Jeanne II. of Duras, had separately adopted Louis III., of the second house of Anjou, and afterwards Alphonso V., King of Aragon. Louis died while disputing the inheritance with the King of Aragon, and his brother René succeeded to his rights. The struggle continued between him and Alphonso, who ultimately gained the victory. He was the first who bore the title of King of the Two Sicilies. It was known, in fact, that from the time of the Sicilian Vespers, Sicily had ceased to belong to Aragon. At the death of Alphonso (1458), the kingdom was again dismembered. The island returned to Aragon, where John succeeded his brother, and Naples remained to Ferdinand, a natural son of Alphonso.



himself master of the regency of this duchy in 1479, supplanting in power Bonne of Savoy, sister-in-law of Louis XI. and mother of the young Duke John Galéas, brutified by sensual pleasures, and incapable of reigning himself. Louis the Moor, uncle of John Galéas, had left to him the title and apparel of sovereign power; but he held all the authority in his own hands. Afflicted by the divisions in Italy, he thought of uniting it into one body; but his genius provoked the jealous hate of all the sovereigns of that country. Threatened by the Venetians, and distrusting the new Pope, Alexander VI., who was always ready to sell himself to the party that offered most, he believed that he needed the support of the French, and called them into Lombardy.

Situation and  
policy of Louis  
the Moor at  
Milan.

From that time Charles VIII. no longer hesitated; encouraged by his two favourites, the Cardinal Briçonnet, Bishop of Saint Malo, and of Vesc, Sencschal of Beaucaire, and vainly opposed by Anne of Bourbon and her husband, he resolved to depart. Already he thought that after having conquered Italy he would, through the Pope, set free the Sultan Zizim, whom his brother Bajazet II., Emperor of the Turks, had driven from the throne, and intended with the support of his name to march upon Constantinople. About this time Ferdinand died at Naples, leaving two sons—Alphonso II., who succeeded him, already celebrated in his wars against the Turks; and Frederic, to whom his brother entrusted the command of the Neapolitan fleet.

It was in the month of August, in the year 1494, that the French army began to pass over the Alps. It was composed of three thousand six hundred men-at-arms, of twelve thousand archers or cross bowmen, eight thousand Gascon foot soldiers armed with arquebuses, and eight thousand Swiss and Germans, forming in all thirty-two thousand men, accompanied by a formidable artillery, then the best in Europe. Italy rose at their approach.

Departure of  
Charles VIII. for  
Italy. First  
hostilities, 1494.

On arriving at Milan, the King saw in the citadel Duke John Galéas, who, nearly deprived of sense, and exhausted by his debauches, was sinking, attacked by a disease which poison had probably caused, and which shortly afterwards bore him to the tomb. Louis the Moor soon took the title of Duke of Milan. The French army continued its march across Lombardy, and arrived upon the

territory of Florence, where some places which barred its progress were carried. The Swiss committed frightful barbarities there, massacring all the prisoners, both inhabitants and soldiers. Terror went before the army. Alarmed by the recital of these atrocities, Peter di Medici, son of Lorenzo the Magnificent and chief of the Florentine republic, delivered to the French many towns and strong castles. The people, indignant, rose against him, while that young man, incapable and presumptuous, sought a refuge in Venice, and the Florentines believed themselves free. They hailed the French with acclamations as their liberators. Pisa and Florence opened their gates, and Charles, admitted into the towns as an ally, entered them as a conqueror. A stranger to the revolution that was being enacted around him, ignorant of the motives of the kind

Charles VIII. at  
Florence, 1494.

reception of the people, he spoke as a master to their deputies, and told them in answer to their friendly speeches, that he did not know yet whether he would give them as governors the Medici or French counsellors. The indignation of the Florentines was at its height. "If it be so," said Peter Caponi, chief of the deputation, "sound your trumpets, and we will sound our bells." The people ran to arms: the houses and the vast palaces of Florence were filled with soldiers. Charles VIII. perceived the danger, and renounced his pretensions. He recalled Caponi, obtained a subsidy to help him in his enterprise, and promised to restore at the end of the war the fortresses delivered up by the Medici.

Ferdinand, son of Alphonso II., charged by his father to stop the French, was supported neither by the Pope nor the Florentines. Too weak to struggle alone, he recoiled before the enemy, and Charles VIII. arrived almost at Rome without drawing sword. Alphonso, whose armies melted away without fighting, reduced to despair, abandoned his people and his throne, and thenceforth only thought about his treasures and his conscience. Minister to the cruelties of his father, he saw arranged before him the shadows of his victims, and recognized the hand of God in his disasters.

Abdication and  
flight of  
Alphonso II., 1495.

Agitated by a superstitious terror, he abdicated in favour of his son Ferdinand; then he embarked with his riches, and sailed towards Mazarra, in Sicily. There he shut himself up in a house of the religious Olivétans, passing his

days in fasting and prayers; he died during the same year. Ferdinand II. saw his army seized with fear. A sedition broke out in Naples. He left in order to calm it down, and entrusted his army to the Milanese Trivulzio, who betrayed him, and sold the army to Charles VIII. Ferdinand only came back in time to be witness of this infamous treachery; he returned to Naples, which shut its gates upon him, and embarked with his family for the island of Ischia. Charles VIII. arrived before Naples, all of the privileges of which he confirmed, and made a triumphal entry into the town.

Entry of  
Charles VIII.  
into Naples,  
1495.

The French warriors, intoxicated with their glory, thought only of enriching themselves promptly. Their captains had demanded from the King the highest dignities and the most important fiefs in the kingdom, and Charles refused nothing. He knew neither the names of the Angevin barons to whom he owed gratitude, nor those of the barons of Aragon, the proper treatment of whom was of great importance to him. He offended all, and there was scarcely a gentleman whom he had not thrown into the party of malcontents by a denial of justice or by some imprudent outrage. Still, the storm growled behind him. The powers of Europe became alarmed at his rapid successes. Spain, Maximilian, Venice, and the Pope leagued themselves secretly together against him, and the soul of this league was his ancient ally, Louis the Moor. The conduct of the French in his respect

European league  
against Charles  
VIII., 1495.

was as injurious as it was rash. Forgetting his services, and the need that they still had for him, they haughtily reproached him with the death of John Gálás, refused to recognize his title, and the Duke of Orleans, invoking the rights that he held from Valentina Visconti, his grandmother, entitled himself the Duke of Milan. Louis the Moor only waited for the moment of vengeance, and that moment soon presented itself. Philip de Comines, ambassador from the King to Venice, was informed of the projects of this formidable league, and hastened to give a warning to the King, who slept upon his triumph in the midst of the most frivolous and foolish occupations. Charles ordered an immediate retreat, and, rejecting the offer that Ferdinand II. had made to him to hold for him in fief the crown of Naples, he named

Retreat of the  
French.

his relation Gilbert de Montpensier viceroy of the kingdom, and entrusted to him a portion of the army.

The Duke of Orleans, whom Charles had left at Asti in order to preserve communications with his kingdom, had compromised by his imprudence the retreat of the French. Impatient to seize the ducal crown of Milan, he had attacked Louis the Moor, who, after having repulsed him, held him in blockade at Novarre. All Lombardy arose; the Venetian army arrived and united itself with the Milanese; Francis di Gonzaga, Marquis of Mantua, commanded their united forces, and the retreat was cut off. The French army, very inferior in numbers, met them near Fornovo; it was attacked in the pass of Taro, and gained a signal victory. This battle of

Fornovo, where a multitude of Italians lost their lives, made safe the retreat of Charles VIII. The King, by the treaty of Vercell, made peace with Louis the Moor, and recognized him as Duke of Milan, and that prince declared himself in return a vassal of the crown of France for the fief of Genoa.\*

While Charles returned to his states, Ferdinand and Gonzalvo of Cordova—the conqueror of Grenada, and the greatest captain of his century—attacked the French left in the kingdom of Naples. The viceroy, Gilbert de Montpensier, was compelled to evacuate the capital. He permitted himself to be shut up in Atella; reduced to capitulation, he with five thousand soldiers laid down their arms, and engaged to leave the kingdom after having restored all the captured places with the reserve of Gaeta, Venosa, and Tarentum. An epidemic cut down his troops; he himself was attacked by it, and died at Pozzuolo: barely five hundred soldiers survived him. Charles VIII. received the news of these disasters at Lyons and Tours, in the midst of licentious fêtes. He projected a second expedition, when in 1498 he was struck with apoplexy, in consequence of a violent shock. He died in his château of Amboise, at the age of twenty-eight years.

The French lose  
Naples and Sicily,  
1496.

Death of Charles  
VIII., 1498.

\* After the revolt of 1409, the republic of Genoa was given anew to France. Charles VIII. ceded it to the Duke of Milan; Louis XII. recovered it; and Francis I. lost it definitively.

One of the distinctive traits of his character was an extreme kindness of disposition. "The most humane and the sweetest word of man that ever existed," wrote Comines, "was his; for never did he say to any man a thing that could displease him." His incapacity was generally known, and his military successes in the eyes of his contemporaries were looked upon as prodigies. His gentleness and goodness were appreciated; France knew that there was good intention in that which he wished to do for her, and dropped tears to his memory. He had in the space of two years lost three sons at a very early age. The Duke of Orleans, grandson of the brother of Charles VI., was his nearest relative.

## CHAPTER IV.

REIGN OF LOUIS XII.

1498-1515.

THE Duke of Orleans was thirty-six years old when he ascended the throne under the name of Louis XII. He soon took the titles of King of France, of Jerusalem, and the Two Sicilies, and Duke of Milan, in order that there might be no doubt in Europe as to his pretensions with regard to Italy. The accession of this prince restored to the crown the apanage of Orleans, of which part constituted the duchy of Orleans, the county of Blois, and that of Valois. Louis XII. bestowed the latter county in apanage on Francis, Count of Angoulême, his cousin, and who was his successor. He treated with kindness La Trémouille and his ancient enemies, saying that the King of France could forgive the injuries of the Duke of Orleans; and he gave all his confidence to Georges d'Amboise, Archbishop of Rouen, and afterwards cardinal.

The first acts of Louis XII. were wise and useful. He diminished the taxes, re-established order in the finances and the administration, and confirmed an ordinance that the Chancellor Guy de Roquefort had made Charles VIII. sign, for the creation of a sovereign court or great council. This court, composed of the chancellor, twenty counsellors, ecclesiastical or lay, and the masters of the petitions of the royal mansion, was destined, said the King, to sustain his rights and prerogatives. It strengthened and adjusted the royal authority, and Louis XII. deserved the gratitude of the people on account of the wise reforms which it brought into the legislation. It restrained the abusive privileges of the university, by which the jurisdiction of the tribunals and the gathering of the taxes were continually impeded. The four faculties assembled on this subject, and pronounced, as customary, the cessation of the studies and of preaching. The King and his ministers severely

Accession of  
Louis XII., 1498.

The Great  
Council.

reprimanded their deputies. The struggle lasted for eight months, after which the university submitted, and ceased to have recourse to that scandalous expedient.

Queen Anne had retired into Brittany soon after the death of Charles VIII., her husband, and hastened to make an act of sovereignty by issuing moneys and publishing edicts. Her duchy was about to escape from France if she did not espouse the King, and Louis resolved to accomplish this marriage. He was married to Jeanne, daughter of Louis XI.; and although there was no legal motive for a divorce, he solicited from Pope Alexander VI. the rupture of the first engagement, and caused him to be favourable by promising the duchy of Valentinois to Cæsar Borgia, his son. Jeanne, who lived apart from her husband, given up entirely to exercises of piety, opposed conscientiously an unexpected resistance to a project which appeared culpable to her, and the scandal of a shameful trial became public. All the motives alleged by the King were false or deceptive; however, the judges pronounced the divorce, and the dispensation for a new marriage was brought to Louis by Cæsar Borgia, who delivered to Georges d'Amboise the cardinal's hat. Louis XII. immediately married Anne of Brittany, and the contract proved that he had again acted more in the interest of his own greatness than that of France, for the duchy was not irrevocably united with the crown, but was declared transmissible to the second child of the Queen, or, in default of a second child, to her nearest heir.

Marriage of the  
King with Anne  
of Brittany,  
1499.

Soon after this union, Louis made his claims upon the Milanese profitable, although he could only invoke them in quality of being grandson of Valentina Visconti. The duchy of Milan was an imperial masculine fief; the rights invoked by Louis XII. were therefore void. They were sustained by a powerful army, which, with the support of the Venetians and the Pope, subdued the Milanese in twenty days. Louis Sforza, or the Moor, abandoned by all, took refuge with his son-in-law, the Emperor Maximilian. The administration of the French at Milan was oppressive; a revolt soon broke out; Louis Sforza returned with imposing forces, and La Trémouille, at the head of a new army, passed into Italy. Louis the Moor was defending Novarre with

Conquest of  
the Milanese,  
1499.

numerous troops when La Trémouille appeared before that place. Swiss fought in the two armies, and composed the principal force of Louis; they betrayed him, capitulated shamefully in spite of him, and delivered him up to the French. Louis XII. abused the rights of a conqueror with respect to his prisoner; he held him until his death locked up in the tower of Loches in strict captivity. Master of the Milanese, he assisted the Pope and Cæsar Borgia in subduing the Romagna; then he turned his eyes towards Naples, the ephemeral conquest of Charles VIII., where Frederic, in 1496, had succeeded his nephew Ferdinand II.

Louis XII. was not alone in coveting this beautiful country; Ferdinand the Catholic, King of Aragon, wished for his part. In spite of the ties of family which united him with Frederic, the King of Aragon acceded at Grenada to a secret treaty by which Naples and the Abruzzi were chosen by France and the southern provinces by Spain.

Frederic, menaced by the French armies, solicited the support of his relative, that same Ferdinand who had just despoiled him, and who hastened to send to him the celebrated Gonzalvo of Cordova. The latter promptly introduced the Spaniards into the principal fortresses, and then showed to the unfortunate Frederic, so shamefully deceived,

the treaty of division. The war between the despoilers was the only result of this detestable conquest. The French and the Spaniards disputed about the revenues of the kingdom, and, when Gonzalvo believed that he was strong enough, hostilities broke out. He gained two consecutive victories, the one at Aubigny, in Séminara, and the other at Cérignoles, where the Viceroy

Nemours, the last of the Armagnacs, perished, and the French only preserved in the kingdom the single town of Gaeta. Louis XII. assembled three new armies, of which two marched upon Spain; the third advanced towards Naples, when suddenly the death of Alexander VI. unsettled all Italy; Cæsar Borgia fell dangerously ill at the same time. The illness of Cæsar Borgia at the moment of his father's death annulled his power and took from him all the fruit of his iniquitous intrigues. Louis XII. lost his most powerful ally in Italy in the person of Alexander VI.; and the irascible Julius II., successor to the Pontiff, soon created

Treaty of  
Grenada, 1500.

War between  
Spain and  
France.

Battle of  
Cérignoles,  
1503.



for him in that country new perils and insurmountable obstacles. The French army, commanded by the Marquis of Mantua, was for a long time held in check by Gonzalvo on the banks of the Garillan; but at last, when attacked by that great captain, it took to flight. Gaeta opened its gates to the Spaniards, and the French were everywhere repulsed, in spite of the exploits of La Palisse, of Aubigny, of Louis d'Ars, of D'Aligre, and the heroic valour of the Chevalier Bayard, the most celebrated amongst these illustrious warriors. The kingdom of Naples was thus lost a second time to France.

The French lost  
a second time  
the kingdom of  
Naples.

While France experienced in the exterior such great reverses, a greater danger threatened her in the interior. Queen Anne, an ambitious and haughty princess, altogether occupied with the interests of her family, was little affected by the grandeur and prosperity of the kingdom. She wished for her daughter Claude, heiress of the duchy of Brittany, a husband who had in perspective the sceptre of universal monarchy, and destined for her young Charles of Austria, who was then Charles Quint.

This prince, son of the Archduke Philip, sovereign of the Low Countries, inherited Spain through his mother, Jeanne the Foolish; and Louis XII., by the secret treaty of Blois, ceded to him, as a dowry for the Princess Claude, Brittany, part of the inheritance of the dukes of Burgundy united with France, all his rights over the Milanese, and the kingdom of Naples. The King signed this treaty, which would have rendered him guilty of treason towards France if Louis when signing it had had the use of his reason; but he was then dangerously ill at Blois: it was thought that his end was approaching, and the Queen, only thinking of her own interests, arranged immediately for her retirement into Brittany. Already had she embarked on the Loire with her treasures, when the Marshal of Gié, governor of Angers, and superintendent of the education of young Francis of Angoulême, prevented her flight, which threatened to infringe the integrity of the kingdom. He caused the vessels laden with the riches of the Queen to be seized, and signified to her that he would arrest her if she passed beyond the boundary. Louis XII. recovered; but the Marshal, accused of the crime of high treason against the crown for this act of firmness, was punished by the loss of his offices.

Treaty of Blois,  
1505.

Feudalism expired: However, such was still the respect for its customs that in the year 1505 Louis XII. did homage to the Emperor Maximilian for the duchy of Milan, and made him an oath of obedience. In the following year he received from the States-General assembled at Tours the surname of *Father of the People*, and was entreated by them to marry his daughter Claude to his cousin Francis, Count of Angoulême, heir presumptive to the crown.\* This request anticipated the secret desire of the King, who, reproaching himself with the sad treaty of Blois, had already seized an opportunity to break it. He heard with favour the wish of the States, and the royal betrothals were immediately celebrated.

Marriage of the Princess Claude with Francis of Angoulême. Definite union of Brittany with France, 1506.

Louis XII., in spite of his reverses, had always fixed his eyes on Italy. Genoa then was in submission to the French, who, carrying into that republic all the prejudices of the feudal nobility, were indignant at seeing the bourgeois exercising the power conjointly with the nobles. The latter, sustained by the French Government, insulted the people, and walked about with poignards upon which they had caused to be engraved an insulting device. The people revolted, took a dycer for Doge, and drove away the French. Louis XII. swore that he would have vengeance, and soon appeared under the walls of Genoa with a brilliant army. He entered, sword in hand, into the vanquished city, caused seventy-nine of the principal citizens together with the Doge to be hanged, and pardoned the others, burdening them with a tax of three hundred thousand florins, a sum sufficient to ruin the republic.

Louis XII. chastises revolted Genoa, 1507.

Venice served as the bulwark for France against Germany, and had shown itself her faithful ally in the campaign of Italy. The King ought to have kept on good terms with Venice as much for policy as for gratitude; but the hate which animated the sovereigns of Europe against republics stifled every other sentiment in the heart of Louis XII. He excited without motive the Emperor Maximilian, the Pope, and the King of Aragon, against the Venetians. The Cardinal d'Amboise was the soul of this league, known under the name of the *League of Cambray*, a town where the treaty of alliance was signed between those sovereigns and Louis XII. The French soon marched against Venice, and

League of Cambray, 1509.

\* Louis XII. had no male child.

gained the victory of Agnadel. The King, putting in practice the odious principles of the Florentine Machiavelli, subdued his enemies by terror and treated the vanquished with pitiless cruelty. The Venetian state, as far as the lagunes, was soon conquered. But the design of Pope Julius II. was to make the pontifical state dominant in Italy, to free the Peninsula from the foreign yoke, and to constitute the Swiss guardians of its liberties. He had only entered with regret into the treaty of Cambrai, in order to subdue some places in the Romagna, and through jealousy with regard to the Venetian power. It was, however, only with the assistance of the Venetians that he could deliver Italy from its most dangerous enemies. He connected himself with them after their reverses, and, detaching himself from the League of Cambrai, he formed another, which he called *The Holy*, with the Venetians, the Swiss, and Ferdinand the Catholic. All together attacked the French; nevertheless the latter obtained some brilliant advantages under the young and impetuous Gaston de Foix, Duke of Nemours, nephew of the King, who achieved three victories in three months. The glorious battle of Ravenna, where this hero of twenty-three years, "a great captain before he had been a soldier,"\* perished, dying at the moment of his triumph, was the end of the successes of Louis XII. in Italy.

Battle of Agnadel, 1509.

The Holy League, 1510.

Battle of Ravenna, 1512.

A council held at Pisa by some schismatic cardinals, partisans of the king of France and the emperor, had suspended the authority of the Pope. Louis XII., in spite of the scruples of his conscience and the profound discredit which fell upon this council, had caused its declaration to be published in France, in the hope of compelling the Pontiff to sue for peace. The inflexible Julius II. responded to this boldness on the part of the King by signing the Holy League, and by convoking the council of Lateran, where eighty-three bishops from all parts of Christendom recognised him as head of the Church. New disasters for France marked out the course of that year. Genoa revolted, and elected as doge Janus Fregosi, proscribed by the French. Ferdinand the Catholic conquered Navarre, where the house of Albret, an ally of France, reigned. Julius II., however, did not enjoy for any length

Council of Pisa, 1511.

\* Guicciardini.

of time the disgrace of Louis. He died in 1513; and the cardinal de Medici, as great an enemy of France, succeeded him, under the name of Leo X. Taught by experience, Louis XII. at last became reconciled with Venice, and united himself with that republic by the treaty of Orthez, while the Emperor Maximilian, Henry VIII. king of England, Ferdinand the Catholic and the Pope formed the coalition called the League of Malines against him. League of Malines, 1513. La Trémouille conducted into Lombardy a French army, which was defeated by the Swiss at Novara: it recrossed the Alps, abandoning the Venetians to themselves, and Italy was lost for ever.

The English army then gained in Artois the battle of Guinegate, known in history under the name of the *Journée des éperons* (Battle of the spurs) on account of the complete rout of the French Royal troops. The most illustrious captains, and among others La Palisse, Bussy d'Amboise, and the Chevalier Bayard, were taken prisoners. Pressed at the same time by the Swiss, who besieged Dijon, by the Spaniards, and by the English; deprived of his ally by the death of James IV. King of Scotland, killed at the battle of Flodden; and lastly, tormented by his conscience, Louis XII. renounced the schism, abandoned the Council of Pisa, removed to Lyons, and signed, in 1514, a truce at Orleans with the Pope and all his powerful enemies.

Hostilities suspended by the truce of Orleans, 1514. The cost and the misfortunes of so many wars had compelled the King to increase the taxes, to reclaim his gratuitous gifts, and alienate his domain. Queen Anne was no more, and in order to insure peace between England and France, Louis demanded and obtained in marriage the hand of Mary, sister to Henry VIII., engaging himself to pay during ten years a hundred thousand crowns per annum to the English monarch. This marriage between a young princess of sixteen years and a man of fifty-three, exhausted and sickly, was fatal to Louis XII. He died, without leaving a son, on January 1, 1515, a few months after the celebration of his marriage.

Many brilliant sayings and traits of courage are narrated of this prince. At the battle of Agnadell, when the Venetian artillery was

directed towards the position where he was, it was said to him that he exposed himself too much. "Not at all," said he, "I have no fear; but whosoever is afraid, let him put himself behind me."\* Louis XII. loved the people, and sustained without prodigality the dignity of his crown. He was economical; his court accused him of being avaricious, and caused him to be represented as such on the stage. He heard of it without anger: "I like better," he said, "to see my courtiers laughing at my avarice than to see my people weeping at my extravagance." He had recourse to a dangerous expedient—the sale of the public posts—in order to increase his revenues without burdening the people; still, he did not extend this practice to the offices of judicature. The importance of the parliament of Paris, already diminished under the preceding reigns by the creation of the parliaments of Toulouse, Grenoble, Bourdeaux, and Dijon, was again weakened under Louis XII. by the creation of the parliaments of Rouen and Aix. The wise regulations of the King for the administration of justice and the finances rendered him worthy of the great name of *Father of the People*, which the States of Tours had bestowed upon him. In 1510 he had lost his minister and friend, the cardinal Georges d'Amboise, who had the rare happiness, for a prime minister, to see his name blessed by the people. "Let no one interfere with Georges," said they. Archbishop of Rouen and friend of the arts, he covered Normandy with elegant structures, the first attempts of the *Renaissance*, and he would have merited a place in the rank of great citizens, if his counsels for foreign policy had not drawn France, his king, and himself into a fatal course, in which a wise and good prince and a devoted minister were to be seen abandoning towards strangers the maxims which made their glory in the interior of the kingdom.

His character.

Georges d'Amboise.

The example and the principles of Louis XII. had made a school in Europe, and diplomacy was born before the science of the rights of the peoples was known and respected. Nations believed that they had no moral duty to fulfil towards one another, and thought that personal interest and success justified fraud, treachery, and the most atrocious violence. The celebrated Florentine Machiavelli had

\* Memoires de Brantôme.

made a science of this frightful policy, of which the most famous disciples were Ferdinand the Catholic, Alexander VI., and the execrable Caesar Borgia, his son, the hero of Machiavelli. Louis XII.

Policy of Louis XII. was their rival in violence and perfidy, buying, betraying, and sacrificing peoples without scruple according to the interest of the moment. He only gathered, as did the most part of these sovereigns, bitter fruits from so many shameful acts. It was still necessary that Europe and its kings should suffer long calamities before finding out that nations, like individuals, are allied between themselves by sacred obligations, and that morality alone, in strict union with policy, can guarantee to them peace and security.

General considerations upon Europe in the 15th century. During the century, which had just passed away the world had put on a new aspect. Great wars had weakened the aristocracy, rallied the people round their sovereigns, and given a prodigious development to the sentiment of national independence. The three great nations, Spain, England, and France, had become firmly constituted, and all authority had passed into the hands of the kings. The military republic of the Swiss was elevated for a short time by the fall of the house of Burgundy, but the powerful republican states of the North and of the South had disappeared. The Hanseatic League, composed of eighty towns, occupying all the southern borders of Germany, had lost its commercial preponderance, which had passed to the rival towns of the Lower Rhine and Belgium, then subject to the house of Austria, of which Frederic III. and Maximilian founded the future greatness. Venice was humiliated, Florence and Genoa were enfeebled. In the midst of this fusion of all political powers into one only, under the triumph of the monarchical principle in Europe, there germinated the seed of the greatest revolution which has shaken the Christian world. This event was the emancipation of human thought, of which up to that time spiritual power had restrained the flight.

The Catholic Church was the only authority generally recognized which had survived the fall of the Roman empire. She alone had been able to subdue the barbarians, to struggle effectually against the frightful anarchy of that period by the principles of order and of Christian virtue and by the merit of a great part of her clergy; she alone thus preserved a power of social

State of the Church.

organization in the midst of the general upheaving, and founded the governments of the Middle Ages by arrogating to herself an all-powerful authority over human reason at a time when men recognized no other law between them than that of brute force. It was thus that the Romish Church fulfilled a double mission, which was that of constituting modern society on a Christian basis, and of giving to it the tie of a common faith, powerful enough to enable Europe to stem the flood of the Mussulman invasion, the destroyer of Christianity in Asia. When this double aim was attained, and when the Church had directed the reaction of the crusades, a thousand causes threatened her power each day, while a rival authority grew great at her side. The theological disputes raised by the great schism of the West provoked among the faithful the progress of the spirit of examination. Already the clergy were no longer looked upon as the only dispensers of knowledge, the fall of Constantinople had dispersed the writings of antiquity over the whole of Europe. The expeditions into Italy, so unfortunate in a political sense, introduced the French nation to a more advanced civilization, to an acquaintance with the masterpieces of Raphael and of Michael Angelo, and to the treasures of a literature created by Boccaccio, Dante, and Petrarch, and recently enriched by Machiavelli and Ariosto. The admiration excited by ancient literature and by that of Italy inspired the taste for philological studies; and lastly, printing, newly invented, powerfully seconded the work of investigation, of research, and of examination, and spread, with an unheard-of rapidity, all the new opinions. During this period, and almost without interruption, the throne of Rome was occupied by a succession of pontiffs whose minds were little conformed to the spirit of Christianity. After Alexander VI. appeared Julius II., the warrior pope, whose ambitious pride caused streams of blood to pour forth; the magnificent and frivolous Leo X. came afterwards, and added to the afflictions of the Church. Meanwhile, some bold reformers, Wycliffe in England, John Huss and Jerome of Prague in Germany, had reproduced some of the doctrines of the Waldenses, and the horror excited by the funeral pile of John Huss prepared the way for new reformers, when the odious traffic in indulgences commenced. The building of the magnificent structures of Leo X., and above all, of the church of Saint Peter at Rome, required immenso

sums. The Pope sold his pardons to the faithful; monks by his order overran the whole of Europe, and sold the Roman indulgences in the wine-houses and places of debauch. Luther then appeared. This famous man, a monk of the order of the Augustins, thundered against the culpable traffic of the pontifical court, and tried to reform the abuses of the Church. It was this circumstance that gave the name *Reform* to the revolution that he worked. It required nearly two centuries to accomplish it, and its origin dates from the period when feudalism expired in France, and when monarchical power obtained its highest degree of influence in the great states constituted in the fifteenth century.

This epoch is, moreover, that of the greatest enterprises and the most celebrated inventions. The Genoese Christopher Columbus had discovered America in 1492, and had given a new world to Spain; and soon after, in 1497, the Portuguese Vasco di Gama found the route to India by doubling the Cape of Good Hope. Maritime commerce quitted the Mediterranean Sea in order to cover the ocean with its fleets; new military tactics were created; the use of gunpowder, which had become generally spread, entirely took away from the aristocracy their superiority of strength; diplomacy had sprung into existence; the sovereigns began to comprehend that it was necessary to balance mutually their influence in order to prevent the most powerful from aggrandizing themselves at the expense of the weakest; lastly, printing was about to establish new and indestructible bonds between men. All the forces created by the great discoveries of the fifteenth century were to be tried and developed simultaneously with religious reform and the new birth of art in the sixteenth: everything announced that the new century would be an age of intellectual development, of movement, and of combat.

Discoveries, tactics, diplomacy.



# THIRD EPOCH.

ABSOLUTE MONARCHY.

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FROM THE ACCESSION OF FRANCIS I. TO THE CONVOCA-  
TION OF THE STATES-GENERAL BY LOUIS XVI.

1515-1789.



## BOOK I.

### FROM THE ACCESSION OF FRANCIS I. TO THE FIRST WARS OF RELIGION IN FRANCE.

RIVALRY OF FRANCIS I. AND CHARLES V.—PREACHING OF THE REFORMA-  
TION.—CONTINUATION AND END OF THE ITALIAN WARS.

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#### CHAPTER I.

REIGN OF FRANCIS I. UNTIL THE SIGNATURE OF THE TREATY OF MADRID.  
1515-1526.

UNDER Francis I. all was silence around the throne: the States-General were ~~now~~ more convoked; the parliaments proclaimed the doctrine of absolute power; the submissive clergy invoked the protection of the sceptre, and the expiring genius of the old armed feudality was reduced to powerlessness by the irrevocable union of Brittany with the Crown. Thenceforth from the Ocean to the Alps, from the Somme to the Mediterranean and the Pyrénées, was to be under the hand of one sole master.

This Prince, twenty years of age at his accession, was the son of Louisa of Savoy and Charles of Angoulême, cousin-german to Louis XII., both descendants of the Duke of Orleans, brother of Charles VI. Brought up by his mother, a violent, covetous, and not entirely chaste woman, he was from his infancy absolute master of his own actions. The romances of chivalry formed his only study, and he wished, like Charles VIII., to march upon the tracks of Roland and of Amadis. He derived from the same books his notions upon the prerogatives of the Crown.

Accession of  
Francis I., 1515.

Character of  
Francis I.

He maintained that every order that emanated from his mouth was a decree of destiny, and could not conceive that the Parliament, Princes, Nobility, or States-General could have the right to restrain his authority. Nevertheless, in spite of his absolute character, he abandoned himself without reserve to Louisa, his mother, and to the Chancellor Antoine Duprat, a venal and corrupt man: these two governed France for a long period in his name.

Scarcely had Francis I. seized the sceptre, than, following the example of Louis XII., he turned his eyes towards Italy; he wished to conquer Milan, where a Sforza still reigned, and raised a formidable army of two thousand five hundred men-at-arms, ten thousand Gascon, and twenty-two thousand German foot-soldiers. Among them might have been distinguished Charles de Montpensier, Duke of Bourbon, the Marshal de Chabannes, J. J. Trivulzio, La Trémoille and his son Talmond, Imbrecourt, Tégigny, Lautrec, Bussy d'Amboise, and Bayard, the "knight without fear and without reproach."

Francis I. at the point of departure, named his mother Regent of France; then he took the command of his army, and arrived at the foot of the Alps, of which the Swiss, allies of the Duke of Milan, guarded all the defiles; but, under the leadership of the celebrated engineer Pedro Novaro, and after unheard-of fatigues, the French passed over the mountains by a road that no other army had taken before them. On descending into the plains, Chabannes and Bayard, as a first exploit, surprised at table and carried off Prosper Colonna, general of Maximilian

First campaign  
of Francis I. in  
Italy, 1515.

Sforza, Duke of Milan. This important capture threw disorder and discouragement among the enemy; but twenty thousand Swiss rushed from their mountains and engaged the king at the terrible battle of Marignano, under the walls of Milan. Without other arms than pikes eighteen feet long and heavy two-handed swords, they threw themselves in serried columns upon the artillery, in spite of the ravages it made in their ranks, and sustained without being broken many charges of the French royal troops. They surrounded Francis I., who had fought like a hero, and broke up the different corps of his army. The latter rallied during the night, and the combat recom-

Battle of Marignano: conquest of the Milanese, 1515.

menced with fury. The Swiss then heard the war-cry of the Venetians, *Marco! Marco!* They believed that the allies of the French had come to their succour, and retired in good order. This bloody battle cost the lives of six thousand French and twelve thousand Swiss; the remains of the conquered army abandoned Italy. Francis I. asked, on the morrow of the battle, to receive the order of chivalry from the hand of Bayard, who was the most distinguished among his most valiant captains at Marignano. The rapid conquest of the duchy of Milan was the result of this decisive victory. In order to ensure its possession, the King concluded an alliance with the Swiss, which for a long period protected the weakest frontier of the kingdom; Alliance with the Swiss, 1516. in like manner, he treated with Pope Leo X., engaging himself to maintain at Florence the authority of Lorenzo and Julian de Medici, near relatives of the Pontiff, and to abolish the Pragmatic Sanction, which founded the liberties of the Gallican Church upon the decrees of the Council of Bâle.

Charles VII. had constituted these decrees a law of the State; they proclaimed the superiority of the Councils over the Popes, refused to the Pontifical court the revenue of the vacant sees and benefices, and entrusted to the chapters of the churches and monasteries the election of the bishops and abbés. Louis XI. had afterwards abandoned that doctrine, but it was always recognized by the Parliament and the University of Paris. The Court of Rome had constantly protested against these decrees, and they were definitely suppressed by the Concordat which Leo X. and Francis I. signed in 1516. Concordat, 1516. This celebrated treaty admitted the superiority of the Popes over the Councils, and restored to the Pontifical court the immense revenue of the *Annates*.\* It took away from the chapters the nomination to the prelatures, and gave it to the King, reserving the third of the vacant benefices for the graduates of the French universities. This Concordat, in order to bind equally the Church and France, ought to have been accepted by the fifth council of Lateran, then sitting at Rome, and by the Parliament of Paris. The Council accepted it without deliberation;

\* The first year's revenue of the benefices which happened to be vacant, was called the *Annates*.

but the Parliament and the University resisted the orders of the King, invoking the Pragmatic of Charles VII. Offended at any opposition to his will, as an outrage against royal majesty, Francis I. commanded absolute obedience. A deputation of magistrates came to address remonstrances to him. He was furious, and threatened to throw them into an underground dungeon. The Parliament submitted, and registered the Concordat, but protested against the violence which compelled them to do it. It was constrained in the following year to sanction a barbarous law, which punished offences connected with the chase by whippings, confiscation, or death. "Obey," said the Chancellor Duprat to the magistrates, "or the King will only look upon you as rebels, and will chastise you as the lowest of his subjects." From that moment all yielded in silence, and the monarch glorified himself in having made kings their own masters.

Abasement of the  
Parliament under  
the Royal  
authority.

The young rival of Francis I., he who was about, for so many years, to dispute with him the first rank in Christendom, now commenced to show himself upon the scene of the world. Ferdinand the Catholic died in 1516, leaving the throne to his daughter Joan the Simple, naming as Regent of Castille, Cardinal Ximenes, who, notwithstanding his great age, grasped the reins of the State vigorously, and bowed down the people and the rebellious nobility under his iron will. Charles of Austria, sixteen years old, son of

Inheritance of  
Charles of  
Austria.

Joan the Simple, was associated on the throne with his mother, by the Cortes of the kingdom. This young prince, known in after-time under the name of Charles V., was, through his father Philip the Handsome, inheritor of the Low Countries, and in 1516, the Emperor Maximilian, his grandfather, left him his hereditary states. Before he was twenty, Charles found himself master of Spain, of the Low Countries, of Austria, of the kingdom of Naples, and the Spanish possessions in America; he was already the most powerful monarch in Europe. Ruled at this period by the Seigneur of Chièvres, his governor, nothing as yet indicated the great faculties of his mind; but soon his prudence, his ambition, the depth and perseverance of his policy, gave to his name as much brilliancy as his numerous crowns. The King of France, by the geographical situation of his states, their compactness, and their

resources, more than by their extent, was the only one able to rival him in power, and he asserted his equality often with more audacity than prudence or good fortune. His long and bloody rivalry with Charles of Austria occupied a great part of the sixteenth century. The relations between these two sovereigns commenced, however, by a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, signed at Noyon in 1516, at the moment when Charles inherited the Crown of Spain. This Prince promised Francis I. to marry his daughter, then in the cradle; the marriage was to be accomplished when she was twelve years old; and Francis had to give her as a dowry all his rights over the kingdom of Naples.

Treaty of Noyon,  
1516.

The death of the Emperor Maximilian caused the breaking out between the two monarchs of the first symptoms of the struggle that was only to finish with their lives. Both of them had pretensions to the Empire\*. Francis was

Election of  
Charles of  
Austria to the  
Imperial throne

\* The Empire, or the *Holy Roman Empire of the Germanic nation*, founded in 800 by Charlemagne, comprehended, in 1518, all Germany and Bohemia. After the extinction of the Carolingian family, the Imperial throne ceased to be hereditary, and election carried it successively to princes of the Houses of Franconia, Saxony, Suabia, Luxembourg, Bavaria, and lastly to the House of Hapsburg or Austria. Until the fourteenth century, the number and the prerogatives of the great feudatories having the right to vote for the election of emperor was undecided. The celebrated golden bull, published in 1357 by the Emperor Charles, regulated the political rights of Germany and founded the constitution, which existed almost without change for four hundred and fifty years. From that time there were seven *Electors*; the Archbishops of Trèves, Mayence, and Cologne, the Dukes of the Palatinate, Brandenburg, and Saxony, and the King of Bohemia. At each vacancy of the throne these seven Electors united together, and decreed the Imperial crown either to a compatriot or to a foreigner. The power of the emperors thus chosen was far from being absolute, for they could neither make laws, nor levy taxes, nor declare war, without the concurrence of the *Diet* or National Assembly. This Diet was divided into three colleges; the Electoral College where the prince-electors sat; that of the lay and ecclesiastical princes when non-electors; and a third, that of the free towns.

Besides this central government, the constitution for the protection of local interests had created in the midst of the great confederation many small confederations, called *circles of the Empire*, each comprising a certain number of agglomerated states, electorates, principalities and free towns, of which the representatives united together in *circular assembly* under the presidency of a *Director*. The number of the circles varied for a long time; but Maximilian, in 1512, divided the Empire definitely into ten circles: Austria, Bavaria, Suabia, Franconia, upper and lower Saxony, the upper and lower Rhine, Westphalia, and Burgundy. The last was soon only nominal.

We have said that the Empire was elective. Many emperors, in order to maintain the crown in their families, used their influence, while living, to cause a prince of their House to be elected as successor. The heir presumptive thus elected bore, until his

prodigal with his gold among the Electors; but Germany, threatened by the Turks, had need of an Emperor whose states would serve as a barrier to the Mussulman invasion, and the Elector of Saxony, Frederic the Wise, having refused the Imperial crown, caused it to be given to the young Austrian Prince, so celebrated from that time under the name of Charles V.\* Francis I., wounded to the heart in his ambition, forgot the treaty of Noyon, re-demanded Naples taken by Ferdinand the Catholic from Louis XII., and summoned the new Emperor to do him homage for the county of Flanders, while Charles V. claimed Milan as an Imperial masculine fief, and the Duchy of Burgundy as the inheritance of his grandmother Marie, daughter of Charles the Bold. The two rivals both sought the support of Henry VIII., King of England. The interview between Francis I. and the English monarch took place at Guines, near Calais. The excessive magnificence which was displayed on both sides caused the name of the *Field of the Cloth of Gold* to be given to the place of conference. After three weeks of

Field of the Cloth of Gold, 1520.

rejoicing and splendid fêtes, the two kings signed a treaty of alliance, which became illusory; for Charles V., having himself first visited Henry VIII., had seduced by his largesses, and by the hope of the Papacy, Cardinal Wolsey, minister and favourite of that Prince. So much eagerness, on the part of the two most powerful monarchs in Europe, to gain Henry to their cause, made him adopt this proud motto:—*He on whose side I am is Master.*

Nevertheless, in spite of so many motives of discord and jealousy, neither of the two rivals was anxious to commence the war. Francis occupied himself with his pleasures, and Charles with the care of subjugating his people. Spain looked upon him as a foreigner, and rose in defence of its political rights; while Germany, indignant at the shameful traffic in indulgences, commenced to agitate through

accession, the title of *King of the Romans*. This was the ancient Cæsar of the Roman Empire.

Napoleon, in 1806, destroyed the old German constitution, and suppressed the title of Emperor of Germany, which since 1468 had continued in the family of Hapsburg, or the House of Austria.

\* He was the fifth Emperor of the name of Charles, and the first King of Spain of the same name.



the voice of Luther. This famous monk had just burned in public at Wittenburg, in 1517, the bull of excommunication issued against him by the Pope. An act so audacious seized Europe with astonishment, and Charles V. convoked a Diet at Worms, in order, as he said, to repress the new opinions, which were dangerous to the peace of Germany. Luther appeared at this Diet with a safe-conduct from the Emperor, and under the more efficacious protection of the Elector of Saxony, Frederic the Wise, and of a hundred armed knights. He energetically defended his doctrines, in which, more than all, he attacked auricular confession, the intercession of the saints, the dogma of purgatory, that of transubstantiation, the celibacy of the priests, and the authority of the Church. The Diet permitted him to retire, and soon afterwards outlawed him. The Elector of Saxony caused him to be carried away by men in masks, and conducted to the fortress of Wartburg, where he lived shut up for nine months, concealed from his friends and enemies. It was there that he commenced his translation of the Bible, and composed a multitude of writings stamped with his genius, which was logical, impetuous, irascible, and yet perfectly fitted, even by its triviality, to govern the still coarse mind of his age.

Beginnings of  
Luther. Diet of  
Worms, 1521.

While these great interests divided Europe, Leo X., always frivolous and inconsiderate, excited the French to the conquest of Naples, promising them his support; then he treated almost immediately with Charles V. At last hostilities commenced. A French army commanded by L'Esparé had just lost Navarre after having invaded it; and the captains of the Emperor, Nassau and Sickingen, had violated the French territory, in order to attack Robert de La Marek, an ally of that kingdom. War broke out in the North and in the South. The Imperial troops took Mourzon, and besieged Mézières, which was saved by Anne de Montmorency and the Chevalier Bayard. Lautrec, lieutenant-general of the King, failed to receive money for the pay of his army. Four hundred thousand crowns had been promised him for this purpose by Francis I.; but Louisa of Savoy had compelled the superintendent-general, Semblançay to deliver up to her that sum, without the knowledge of the King, her son. The Spaniards then

First hostilities  
between Charles  
V. and Francis I.,  
1521.

attacked Lautrec, who, badly supported by the mercenary troops, was beaten at Bicoque. The malcontent Swiss returned to their homes, and Milan was again lost. At the same time Henry VIII. united with the Emperor against Francis I., and both declared war against him, while Adrian VI., former preceptor of Charles V., ascended the pontifical throne. His predecessor, Leo X., had in Italy bequeathed his name to the century. He was great by his magnificence and the enlightened protection that he accorded to art and literature; no monarch was ever surrounded by so many celebrated artists, or knew better how to animate their genius; but few men were less fit than he to sustain the combat against Luther or to represent a successor of the Apostles.

Exhausted by the prodigalities of the King and the thefts of the nobles, more than by the war, the treasury was empty, and money was necessary. Recourse was, in the first place, had to the ordinary means, in raising the land taxes and in borrowing money, but these were not sufficient. Under the fatal inspiration of the minister Duprat, the offices of the magistracy, the number of which was doubled, were sold for money. In vain the Parliaments protested; the new magistrates were maintained, and this deplorable custom of venality, for the first time avowed and recognized, lasted until the French Revolution. Two parties then divided the court; the one, that of Louisa of Savoy, directed by the Chancellor Duprat and Admiral Bonnivet, both far advanced in the favour of the King; at the head of the other party were the Duchess of Chateaubriand, mistress of Francis I., and her brothers Lescuns and Lautrec, sustained by the Constable Duke of Bourbon, the richest and most powerful noble of the kingdom. Louisa of Savoy, forty-seven years old, proposed to the Duke to marry her. Bourbon rejected these offers, adding irony to the refusal. The Princess, furious, swore that she would be avenged, and her resentment was fatal to France. She brought an unjust action against the Duke; the Parliament did not dare to declare its opinion; but Francis, urged on by his mother, seized and united to the Crown the immense possessions of the Constable, which comprehended, among other seignories, Bourbonnais, Dauphiné, Auvergne, Forez,

Battle of Bicoque,  
1522. The French  
driven from Italy.

Sale of the  
offices of  
judicature.

Action against  
the Constable of  
Bourbon, 1523.

Marche, and Beaujolais. He immediately treated secretly with Henry VIII. and Charles V., and invited them both to divide the kingdom. Informed of these negotiations, the King tried to seize his person; Bourbon escaped into Germany, and re-appeared soon afterwards at the head of the armies of the Emperor.

The war then commenced, with advantages to France on all the frontiers. The Germans attacked Champagne and Franche-Comté without success; the Spaniards were repulsed in the South, while La Tremouille successfully defended Picardy against an English army.

In spite of so many perils, Francis I. still dreamed of conquest in Italy; he sent a brilliant army there, under the command of Admiral Bonnivet. This favourite was not a skilful captain, and each of his steps was marked

Second and third  
campaign in  
Italy, 1524, 1525.

by a fault or by a reverse. Francesco Colonna compelled him to raise the blockade of Milan, and to fall back on Ticino. In a few months the French army was in great distress, deprived of provisions and decimated by the plague. Bonnivet ordered a retreat, and got away, actively pursued by the Imperial troops, commanded by the best of the enemy's captains, Lannoy, Pescaire, and the Duke of Bourbon. Bayard commanded the rearguard; a shot struck him in the back, and he was carried to the foot of a tree, his face turned towards the enemy. Bourbon ran towards him and expressed his deep compassion. "It is not I," answered

Death of  
Bayard, 1524.

Bayard, "but you who ought to be pitied, you who fight against your king, your country, and your oath." Thus perished the knight who was dearest to France, and the most accomplished among all those of whom history has preserved the remembrance.

Bourbon and the Marquis of Pescaire invaded Provence, and a number of towns submitted. Marseilles heroically sustained a long siege; it was defended by Renzo de Ceri, chief of a legion of patriotic Italians, an old remnant of the party of liberty crushed out at Florence and Pisa. After forty days of useless attack, the Imperial troops drew off, having been informed of the approach of Francis I., and of the successes of Andrea Doria, a celebrated Genoese Admiral in the service of that monarch. Francis marched into Italy at the head of a third army; he rapidly recovered the whole of the Milanese territory, and besieged Pavia. He remained for a long time before this

place, when the Imperial troops approached, under the orders of Lannoy, Pescaire, and Bourbon, Francis I. waited for them in his lines, and the armies remained in presence of each other for a long period without coming to blows. At length, on the 25th of February, 1525, they engaged in battle, and the imprudent excitement of the King lost it. His artillery made great ravages in the Imperial troops: obliged to pass within range, the latter endeavoured to gain, in open order, and at the top of their speed, a small valley where they would be sheltered from this murderous fire. Francis did not understand this movement: "See where they fly," said he; "let us charge! let us charge!" and immediately rushed, at the head of his retinue, between the guns and the enemy. The artillery, masked, ceased its fire; the enemy rallied and waited with firm composure. At that instant the Swiss of the French army, being attacked in flank, lost ground, and the Duke of Alençon took flight with the rearguard. The Imperial army entirely surrounded the King. In vain Francis I. and his knights performed heroic exploits; Bonnivet, La Palisse, Lescuns, old La Tremouille, and Bussy d'Amboise were killed before his eyes: he himself, thrown from his horse, covered with blood, and twice wounded, was recognized by Pomperan, a gentleman of the Duke of Bourbon, and summoned to surrender. Francis refused to give himself up to a renegade; he caused the Viceroy Lannoy to be called, and gave up his sword to him. It was on the occasion of this bloody battle of Pavia that the King wrote a letter to his mother in which he used a phrase which has since been celebrated: "Madame, all is lost, except honour." Young Henry II. d'Albret, King of Navarre, had been taken prisoner with the King of France. He was imprisoned in the citadel of Pavia, from whence he contrived to escape. Francis was concealed from observation in that of Pizzighettone, and from there transferred to Madrid by order of Charles V.

Battle of Pavia,  
1525.

Captivity of  
Francis I., 1525.

The interests of the kingdom were then confused with those of the persons of the kings. France had learned neither from the misfortunes of King John nor from the madness of Charles VI. the importance of a monarchy protecting itself from the calamities which might befall the monarch. The state seemed to be mad when

the King was mad, and it appeared to be in the hands of the enemy when the King was captive. Francis I., before his departure, had, it is true, conferred the regency of the kingdom upon his mother, Louisa of Savoy; so that a legitimate authority was recognized in France in spite of his captivity; but the sovereignty remained entirely in his person; he alone could accept or reject the conditions imposed on his deliverance; he alone, in fact, represented the will of France, when danger, fear, or weariness no longer permitted him the free use of his own will. The Emperor saw in the captivity of Francis I. the humiliation and ruin of France, and resolved to profit to the utmost by his victory. The King fell ill in prison; Charles, who had, until then, refused to see him, visited him and consoled him by affectionate words; but soon after his recovery he set him at liberty upon sad and dishonourable conditions for France. Overcome with grief, the King thought of abdicating, but had not strength to persist in so noble a resolution; he protested against the treaty which was imposed on him, and signed it, secretly resolved not to observe it. By this treaty of Madrid he ceded all his rights upon Italy; renounced the sovereignty of the Treaty of Madrid, 1526. counties of Flanders and Artois; abandoned to the Emperor, as the descendant of Charles the Bold, the duchy of Burgundy and the county of Charolais, with other seignories. He engaged to marry Eleanor, Dowager Queen of Portugal, sister of the Emperor; he pardoned the Duke of Bourbon, and established him in his rights; finally, he concluded an offensive and defensive league with the Emperor, promising to accompany him in person when he went upon a crusade against the Turks or against heretics. Charles V., on his side, gave up the towns on the Somme which had belonged to Charles the Bold.

After the signature of this treaty the King was exchanged at the frontier for his two sons, and on the same day reached Deliverance of Francis I., 1526. Bayonne, where he found his mother and all his court. He believed that in escaping from his enemies he was equally free from the obligations which he had contracted with them, and replied to the messengers of the Emperor that he could not ratify the treaty of Madrid without the consent of the States of the kingdom and of the duchy of Burgundy.

## CHAPTER II.

COURSE AND END OF THE REIGN OF FRANCIS I.

1526-1550.

FRANCIS I. alleged the rights and wishes of his kingdom as a reason for exempting him from keeping his engagements; he had, however, no intention of consulting France; he would have believed that he was putting himself under the tutelage of the States-General if he had convoked them. Desiring always to oppose to the Emperor a will that should appear national, he called together at Cognac the princes, the nobles, and bishops who then formed part of his court. This assembly disengaged him from his word. The States of Burgundy, on their side, declared that they did not wish to separate from France. Being informed of these declarations, Charles V. answered:—"Let not Francis I. throw his want of faith upon his subjects; in order to keep his word, he ought to die in Spain; let him do it."

Rupture of the  
treaty of Madrid,  
1526.

Italy, however, had only escaped from the French to fall into the avaricious hands of the Imperial troops. Francis then, impatient for vengeance, presented himself to the people of Italy, no longer as master but as an ally; he offered the sword of France in order to free them. Venice, Florence, Francis Sforza, Duke of Milan, and the Pope appealed to him as a liberator, and the King of England himself, afraid of the colossal power of Charles V., entered into the *Holy League*. In the name of the independence of Italy, the Duke of Urbino raised an Italian army; but before the French troops had crossed the Alps, fifteen thousand German infantry, soldiers of the Emperor, descended like a torrent upon Italy; crossing Lombardy, Tuscany, and the Romagna, they threw themselves upon Rome, the centre of the Holy League. The Constable de Bourbon, the idol of these adventurers, and the Lutheran Georga Frondsberg, who carried

The Holy League,  
1527.

round his neck a gold chain, destined, he said, to strangle the Pope, marched at their head. The assault was made on the 6th May, 1527. Bourbon perished while placing a ladder at the foot of the ramparts; but Rome was taken, and the Imperial troops avenged their General by sacking the eternal city and by a Capture and sack of Rome, 1527. frightful massacre. Eight thousand Romans perished on the first day, and the Pope had to sustain a long siege in the Castle of Saint Angelo.

Henry VIII. and Francis I. resolved to set free the Pontiff and Italy. Francis was to furnish the troops, and Henry a subsidy; this sum was far from sufficient, and the King convoked in a "bed of justice" an assembly of the principal personages of the Parliament; he explained to them his conduct, and requested money and their approval. He obtained both, and raised a new army, which he entrusted to Lautrec. The Kings of France and England declared war against the Emperor, who heaped reproaches on Francis I., and received a challenge in answer. Lautrec entered Lombardy, commenced the war with success, and penetrated into the kingdom of Naples. Fourth campaign in Italy, 1528. There he remained without money; an epidemic cut down his army, already exhausted by fatigue and privations; he himself was attacked and died. Another French army, commanded by Saint-Pol, shared the same fate. Scarcely had it entered Milan when it was defeated and dispersed at Landriano; Saint-Pol was taken prisoner. France also lost, about the same time, the assistance of the celebrated Genoese Admiral Andrea Doria, the first sailor of his age. Discontented with the imprudent disdain of Francis I., he quitted his service for that of Charles V., and replaced Genoa, his country, under the protection of the Emperor.

Europe, at this period, was in fear of a new Mussulman invasion. Rhodes, looked upon as the bulwark of Christianity, had sustained, in 1523, a memorable siege against two hundred thousand Turks, commanded by Soliman the Magnificent. The heroic valour of the Knights of Rhodes, and of their grand-master L'Ele- Celebrated siege of Rhodes, 1523. Adam, had proved powerless against their numbers. After six months' siege, Rhodes surrendered, and the Turks advanced into Europe. Charles V., pressed by them and threatened by the Reformers, who had commenced to call themselves "Protestants," on

account of their protestation against Rome, modified his pretensions with regard to France. The misery of the peoples was frightful, and the resources of the two rival sovereigns seemed exhausted. New negotiations were opened, at Cambrai, by the conferences between Louisa of Savoy, in the name of her son, and Marguerite of Austria, ruler of the Low Countries, in the name of the Emperor, her nephew. A treaty was concluded, less onerous, but more shameful in some respects, than that of Madrid, in which the clauses in regard to Artois and Flanders were maintained; the King abandoned the sovereignty of those countries; he engaged, besides, to pay two millions of gold crowns, renounced all rights upon Italy, and abandoned all his allies to the resentment of the Emperor. At this price his two sons were freed, and the duchy of Burgundy still remained to the kingdom. This peace, which threw discredit on France throughout Europe, was signed in 1529, and called *The Ladies' Peace*.

All Italy fell again, almost without resistance, under the yoke of Charles V., who disposed of crowns at his pleasure. Florence alone repulsed the Medici, whom the Emperor wished to impose on them, and sustained for a year an heroic siege. The illustrious sculptor Michael Angelo conducted the defence, and immortalized himself as much by his patriotism as by his genius; but at last the Florentines were compelled to yield. The glory of Michael Angelo alone saved his head; all the best citizens were banished or put to death. In this way the Florentine Republic was subdued.

The fatal Ladies' Peace was a new misfortune, that France owed to Louisa of Savoy and her confidant the Chancellor Duprat. The latter, only a short time in orders, had become Archbishop of Sens and Cardinal; but that was not enough, and he almost died with chagrin when he was not raised to the Pontifical throne; his cupidity, too, exceeded his ambition; in his hands the royal treasury was pillaged, and he made himself master of the richest benefices. The Parliament, which he tried vainly to corrupt by the addition of members devoted to himself, dared to raise its voice against him. The King immediately convoked that body in a bed of justice, and threateningly forbade it to interfere in the

The Ladies' Peace, 1529.

Italy refallen under the yoke of the Imperial troops.

The Chancellor Duprat.



acts of the chancellor and the distribution of benefices. At the request of Duprat he prosecuted the financiers pitilessly, and brought before a commission, Poncher, Treasurer-General, and Semblançay, the retired superintendent of finances. Poncher, during his ministry, had drawn upon himself the hatred of Duprat; Semblançay had excited that of Louisa of Savoy, by revealing the abstraction by her of four hundred thousand crowns intended to defray the expenses of the war in Italy. Chosen from among the enemies of the accused, the judges decreed a sentence of death. The two old men were hanged in 1527, at the gibbet of Montfaucon, and their property was confiscated.

Execution of  
Poncher and  
Semblançay,  
1527.

Duprat, whose administration was so shameful, promoted one measure of high utility. Francis I. until then had governed Brittany only in the quality of duke of that province; Duprat counselled him to unite this duchy in an indissoluble manner with the crown, and he prevailed upon the States of Brittany themselves to request this reunion, which alone was capable of preventing the breaking out of civil wars at the death of the King. It was irrevocably voted by the States assembled at Vannes in 1532. The King swore to respect the rights of Brittany, and not to raise any subsidy therein without the consent of the States Provincial.

The reunion of  
Brittany with  
the Crown  
declared indis-  
soluble, 1532.

The situation of Europe was then almost everywhere threatening or agitated. The greater part of the princes and the states of Germany had admitted the new religious opinions. Many of these princes believed that in adopting them they were justified in seizing for their own profit the property of the Church, and were suspected of having embraced the cause more on account of embarrassed finances than from their hatred for the abuses of the Court of Rome. Already Frederic I. had accorded freedom of conscience to Denmark, while Gustavus Vasa adhered, with the Church of Sweden, to the confession of faith drawn up at the Diet of Augsburg by Melancthon, a disciple of Luther and the most gentle of the Reformers. The German princes, who were partisans of the Reformation, united together in 1531, against the Emperor, by the celebrated league of Smalcald. Lastly, Henry VIII., to whom the Court of

Political and  
religious state of  
Europe.

League of Smal-  
calde, 1531.

Rome had not dared to grant permission for his divorce from Catharine of Aragon, aunt of the Emperor, repudiated that princess in order to marry Anne Boleyn, opposing at the same time the Pope and Luther by executions, and causing himself to be proclaimed by his servile Parliament the head of the Auglican Church. The populace of a great number of countries became agitated, renewing the war of the *Jacquerie*, and the pretensions of the *Levellers*; a crowd of visionaries took up arms; the rallying-word was the necessity of a second baptism; the aim, a terrible war against property, which, they said, constituted a perpetual spoliation with regard to the poor, and against science, which they accused of destroying the natural equality among men. According to them, books, pictures, and statues were the inventions of the devil; they ran from church to church, breaking the images and overturning the altars. The peasants of Suabia and Thuringia rose in insurrection; the latter, under the name of *Anabaptists*, followed the fanatical Muntzer, and next John of Leyden. They tried to join themselves with the insurgents of Franconia, Alsatia, Lorraine, and the Tyrol; they everywhere deposed the magistrates, and seized the property of the nobles and the rich, whom they subjected to frightful treatment. They did an immense injury to the cause of the disciples of Luther, who united with the Catholics in order to fight and exterminate them.

Such was religious state of Europe when Francis I. commenced his violent persecution of the Lutherans or Protestants. For a long time his court and his family were divided in opinion. His sister, Marguerite of Valois, and Anne de Pisseleu, Duchess d'Etampes, his mistress, protected the new belief; Louisa of Savoy had condemned it, inflicting great severities upon its disciples; Francis I. appeared at first to be himself undecided; but his eyes were always glancing back to Italy, the conquest of which the Pope could facilitate for him. This motive, as much perhaps as religious feeling, joined to his antipathy towards the spirit of independence, decided his conduct. He closely united his cause with that of Rome by causing his second son, Henry II., to marry Catherine de Medici, niece of Pope Clement VII. He did not, however, obtain the advantages that he had hoped for from this union. The pontiff only survived the marriage a short time, and had as successor Alexander

Farnese, who became Pope under the name of Paul III.\* Francis I. persevered, nevertheless, in the rigorous course that he had traced out, and proved himself in France a cruel persecutor of the Protestants. Jean Morin, a criminal magistrate, seized a great number in the year 1535, and the King, who found a violent diatribe against the mass affixed to his door, resolved upon appeasing heaven by taking vengeance on this crime. A procession went out one morning from the church of Saint-Germain, preceded by the relics of saints preserved in Paris; the King followed the Holy Sacrament, his head bared, and a torch in his hand; after him walked the queen, the princes, two hundred gentlemen, the parliament, and all the officers of justice; the ambassadors were also present. The procession passed through all the quarters of the town. In each of the six principal places were erected a temporary altar, and near, a scaffold and a pile. At these six places six unfortunates perished, burnt alive amidst the curses of the people; and the King declared that if his own children were to become heretics, he would immolate them. This horrible procession took place on the 21st of January. It was followed by an edict which proscribed the Reformers, confiscated their goods to the profit of their denunciators, and forbade them to print any book on pain of death.

Severities of  
Francis I. with  
regard to the  
Protestants,  
1535.

In spite of this ardent zeal for the Catholic faith, Francis maintained active relations with the Lutherans of Germany and the Protestant princes of the league of Smalcalde. They, however, indignant at his severities, wished to break with him; he calmed them by giving them to understand that those whom he exterminated were similar to the fanatical followers of Muntzer and John of Leyden. Calvin, the apostle of reform in France, had just appeared; he avenged his outraged brethren by establishing, through his work *On the Christian Institution*, dedicated to the King, that if the French Reformers passed the bounds set by Luther, they at least partook of the same principles, and that their doctrines were

\* This Pope promulgated during the reign of Francis I. the bull which instituted the order of the Jesuits, of which Ignatius Loyola was the founder. The aim of this order was to struggle against the progress of heresy, to convert the world to the Romish faith, and to subject it to the Pope, of whom the Jesuits recognized the infallibility in all that concerned faith. The sovereign pontiff named the general of the order, and all the members took an oath of obedience towards him.

reconcilable with public order and the purest morality. The King recognized the necessity for relaxing these persecutions, and during the same year issued an edict of toleration, attributed in part to the influence of Antoine du Bourg, successor to Duprat in charge of the chancellorship.

Charles V. always persevered in his intention of stifling Protestantism, and he would, perhaps, have annihilated it in his States, if other enemies had not suspended his attacks and drawn upon themselves the efforts of his arms.

The Mussulman invasion had made rapid progress; an innumerable Turkish army, conducted across Hungary under the walls of Vienna, had been repulsed in 1529; but the treatment of the Christians by the corsairs of Barbary, a pest until then unknown, desolated the banks of the Mediterranean. Two brothers, named Barbarossa, famous corsairs, had taken possession of Algiers and Tunis, and, covered the sea with their vessels, pillaging the coasts of Spain, France, and Italy, and carrying off into slavery a multitude of Christians every year. One of the brothers, chief admiral of Soliman, alarmed

Expedition of  
Charles V. to  
Tunis.

the whole of Europe. Charles V. armed a formidable fleet against him, commanded, under his orders, by Andrea Doria; he conquered Barbarossa, took Tunis,

and set free twenty thousand Christians. In the meanwhile, Sforza, Duke of Milan, died without issue; Francis claimed the inheritance for his second son, the Duke of Orleans. Already, for some time, France, without plausible motive, had declared war against Charles III., Duke of Savoy,\* brother-in-law of Charles V. Turin

Conquest of  
Piedmont by the  
French, 1536.

and all Piedmont were rapidly invaded by Admiral Chabot de Briou, and the French and Imperial troops

soon found themselves in each other's presence upon the frontiers of Milan. Hostilities broke out; the army of Chabot, very inferior in number, fell back upon France, leaving garrisons in the conquered places. But the Emperor, without stopping to besiege them, crossed the Var at the head of fifty thousand men, announcing that he was going to march upon Paris, and commenced by invading Provence; but there he only found a desert. All the country of

\* Savoy was created a duchy during the reign of Charles V.

Provence had been laid waste by the French armies themselves; everywhere they had torn down the vines, destroyed the wells, and burnt the harvests. The towns had not been more fortunate; Even Aix, the capital, was sacked and abandoned. The Imperial army, exhausted by famine and disease, retraced its steps without having fought.

Invasion of  
Provence by the  
Imperial troops.  
1536.

The Dauphin of France had just died, and although his death appeared natural, Montecuculli, his cup-bearer, was accused of poisoning him; he confessed the crime in the midst of atrocious tortures, named the Emperor as his accomplice, and was dismembered. The war redoubled its fury in the Low Countries and Piedmont; at last, Pope Paul III. arranged that a truce of ten years should be signed between the rival monarchs, who divided the estates of the unfortunate Duke of Savoy, and agreed to see each other at Aignes-Mortes. These two sovereigns, who had inundated Europe with blood on account of their quarrels, and one of whom accused the other of poisoning his son, presented the strange spectacle of a perfectly friendly conference, approaching each other with open arms, and lavishing on each other every evidence of esteem and affection.

Treaty of Nice,  
1538.

A revolt of Ghent soon called Charles V. into Flanders; he was then in Spain, and his shortest route was through France. He requested permission to cross the kingdom, and obtained it, after having promised the Constable Montmorency, that he would give the investiture of Milan to the second son of the King. His sojourn in France was a time of expensive fêtes, and cost the treasury four millions; yet, in the midst of his pleasures, the Emperor was not without uneasiness. Kings, authorized by the customs of those still barbarous times, rarely sacrificed their interests to their word. The Duchess d'Etampes and all the court blamed the scruples of the King: his jester Triboulet\* said one day that, hearing of the arrival of

Sojourn of  
Charles V. in  
France, 1539.

\* The *King's Jester* was a buffoon, very often deformed by nature, whose office it was to amuse the monarch by his sallies. He carried upon his head and in his hands the attributes of Folly, and, in virtue of his title and his costume, he was permitted to say to the king truths that the most respected and the wisest men dared not have uttered.

Charles in France, he had inscribed his name in his tablets in the list of fools. "Were I to allow him to pass through," answered the King, "what would you do?" "I would efface his name," replied Triboulet, "and I would place your name in its place." Francis, however, respected the rights of hospitality; but Charles did not give to his son the investiture of Milan. The King, indignant, exiled the constable for having trusted the word of the Emperor without exacting his signature, and avenged himself by strengthening his alliance with the Turks, the most formidable enemies of the empire. Already, in 1536, Francis I. had opened up negotiations, the first in Europe, with the Sultan Ibrahim, and a Turkish fleet had been directed upon Naples. The treaty of Nice had put an end to the alliance, without severing the relations between the courts of France and Constantinople, and when a new rupture between Charles V. and Francis I. had become imminent, the Sultan Soliman, successor to Ibrahim, was the first ally to whom the King of France addressed himself. The Turks at this period caused the empire to tremble; they entered triumphantly into Buda, the capital of Hungary, and their fleets covered the Mediterranean. A formidable expedition undertaken by the Emperor against Algiers had just failed, and the terror spread by the Ottoman name increased still more. Francis I. then turned to the Lutheran princes of Germany; but his advances were coldly received by men who only saw in him a cruel persecutor of their brethren.

The hatred of the two monarchs was carried to its height by these last events; they mutually outraged each other by injurious libels, and submitted their differences to the Pope. Paul III. refused to decide between them, and they again took up arms. The King invaded Luxembourg, and the Dauphin Rousillon; and while a third army in concert with the Mussulmans besieged Nice, the last asylum of the dukes of Savoy, by land, the terrible Barbarossa, admiral of Soliman, attacked it by sea. The town was taken, the castle alone resisted, and the siege of it was raised. Barbarossa consoled himself for this check by ravaging the coasts of Italy, where he made ten thousand captives. The horror which he inspired recoiled on Francis I., his

Alliance of  
Francis I. with  
the Turks.

Renewal of  
hostilities be-  
tween Charles V.  
and Francis I.,  
1542.

ally, whose name became odious in Italy and Germany. He was declared the enemy of the empire, and the Diet raised against him an army of twenty-four thousand men, at the head of which Charles V. penetrated into Champagne, while Henry VIII., coalescing with the Emperor, attacked Picardy with ten thousand English. The battle of Cerisoles, a complete victory, gained during the same year, in Piedmont, by Francis of Bourbon, Duke d'Enghien, against Gast, general of the Imperial troops, did not stop this double and formidable invasion. Charles V. advanced almost to Château-Thierry. But discord reigned in his army; he ran short of provisions, and could easily have been surrounded; he then again promised Milan to the Duke of Orleans, the second son of the King. This promise irritated the Dauphin Henry, who was afraid to see his brother become the head of a house as dangerous for France as had been that of Burgundy; he wished to reject the offer of the Emperor and to cut off his retreat. A rivalry among women, it is said, saved Charles V. The Duchess d'Etampes was the mortal enemy of Diana of Poitiers, mistress of the Dauphin, and desired, in case the King should die, to secure the powerful protection of his second son. It is declared that she resisted the opinion of the Prince, and Charles was able to retire in safety as he came.

Battle of Cerisoles, 1544.

New invasion of France by Charles V., 1544.

The war was terminated almost immediately afterwards by the treaty of Crespy in Valois. The Emperor promised his daughter to the Duke of Orleans, with the Low Countries and Franche-Comté, or one of his nieces with Milan. Francis restored to the Duke of Savoy the greater part of the places that he held in Piedmont; he renounced all ulterior pretensions to the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, and likewise to the sovereignty of Flanders and Artois; Charles, on his part, gave up the duchy of Burgundy. This treaty put an end to the rivalry of the two sovereigns, which had ensanguined Europe for twenty-five years. The death of the Duke of Orleans freed the Emperor from dispossessing himself of Milan or the Low Countries; he refused all compensation to the King, but the peace was not broken.

Treaty of Crespy in Valois, 1544.

Francis I. profited by it to redouble his severity with regard to the Protestants. A population of many thousands of Waldenses,

an unfortunate remnant from the religious persecutions of the thirteenth century, dwelt upon the confines of Provence, and the County Venaissin, and a short time back had entered into communion with the Calvinists. The King permitted John Mesnier,

Terrible massacre of a Waldensian population, 1540.

Baron d'Oppède, first president of the Parliament of Aix, to execute a sentence delivered against them five years previously by the Parliament. John d'Oppède himself directed this frightful execution. Twenty-two towns or villages were burned and sacked; the inhabitants, surprised during the night, were pursued among the rocks by the glare of the flames which devoured their houses. The men perished by executions, but the women were delivered over to terrible violences. At Cabrières, the principal town of the canton, seven hundred men were murdered in cold blood, and all the women were burnt; lastly, according to the tenor of the sentence, the houses were raised, the woods cut down, the trees in the gardens torn up, and in a short time this country, so fertile and so thickly peopled, became a desert and a waste. This dreadful massacre was one of the principal causes of the religious wars which desolated France for so long a time.

Charles V. then crushed the Lutherans in Germany, and maintained the Catholic faith in Spain by the Inquisition, while Henry VIII. struck equally at both Romish and Lutheran sects. The war continued between him and Francis I. The English had taken Boulogne, and a French fleet ravaged the coasts of England, after taking possession of the Isle of Wight. Hostilities were

Treaty of Guines, 1547.

terminated by the treaty of Guines, which the two kings signed on the edge of their graves, and it was arranged that Boulogne should be restored for the sum of two millions of gold crowns. Francis I. had suffered for a long time in consequence of a shameful disease, brought from America into Europe by Spaniards, and which brought him to his tomb. When he felt death approaching, he addressed, according to the custom of kings, wise advice to his successor. He caused the only son who survived him, Henry, then twenty-nine years old, to draw near to his bed. He recommended him to free his people from the tributes with which he had been compelled to burden them, and to profit by the good state in which he had left the finances. He



was indebted, he said, to the wisdom of his ministers for this good administration, above all to Admiral Annebant and to the Cardinal de Tournon, and recommended Henry always to follow their counsels, whilst he warned him against the pernicious policy of the Constable Montmorency, against the ambition of the Guises, and advised him to exclude them from power. Henry wept at the bedside of his father, but avoided giving him any promise. Henry VIII. and Francis I. died in the same year; the latter had reigned for thirty-three years.

Death of Francis I., 1547.

The chivalric bravery of Francis I., his magnificence, and the protection he afforded to talent, gave popularity to his name; he was called, *The father and restorer of letters*. But the brilliant qualities of this prince were tarnished by great faults and an odious abuse of power. His cruelty with respect to the Protestants ought to be attributed, in part, to the manners and prejudices of his age. But it is very doubtful whether a sincere faith inspired these frightful persecutions, seeing that in Germany he energetically supported those whom he struck in his own kingdom. He sacrificed the blood of his people to the purposes of his ambition, and their gold to his pleasures. In order to defray his expenses he multiplied and sold the offices of judicature, alienated the royal domains, instituted the lottery, and created by a loan of two hundred thousand livres the first perpetual annuities on the Hotel de Ville, the origin of the public debt in France. He prosecuted by illegal means, and before commissions arbitrarily chosen, many men of eminent rank, among others the Chancellor Poyet and Admiral Chabot, and in the judgment against the latter the King substituted his own will for the decision of the judges. He softened, without doubt, the rudeness of the national character by encouraging the progress of the arts; but by abasing the magistracy, placing his caprices above the law, and making a display of adultery, he corrupted the manners of his court and his people, and this corruption increased until the end of the reign of the Valois. The long struggle between Francis I. and Charles V. brought no lasting advantage to the kingdom. His severities against the Reformers prepared the way for bloody civil wars, and, in fine, his reign was less useful than fatal to France.

Considerations upon this reign.

Origin of the public debt in France; annuities on the Hotel de Ville.

France, however, had been increased by a part of Savoy and Piedmont,\* and the royal domain since the death of Louis XII. had acquired Brittany, which was completely and legally united to France under Francis I. in 1532; it was augmented on the accession of Louis XII. by the apanage of Orleans and of Valois, containing the county of Blois, and the duchies of Orleans and Valois, and had gained the county of Angoulême at the accession of Francis I. That prince, lastly, confiscated to the profit of the crown the great possessions of the eldest branch of the House of Bourbon, which comprehended the duchies of Bourbon, Auvergne and Chatelleraut, Forez, the county of Clermont, the dauphiné of Auvergne, and a multitude of secondary fiefs.

France, up to that time, had been divided into bailiwicks in the countries of the north, and into seneschalships in those of the south, for the administration of justice. In the fourteenth century *Généralités* were established for the collection of the imposts; Francis I. completed this organization of ancient France by the creation of nine great military governments, formed for the most part in the frontier provinces, and with a view to the defence of the kingdom. These governments were those of Normandy, Guienne, Languedoc, Provence, Dauphiné, Burgundy, Champagne, Picardy, and Ile de France.† The power was thus centralized more and more. There still existed, however, some great feudal houses. The first among The Bourbons and the Guises. all was that of Bourbon, the issue of the blood royal, which had just been weakened by the disgrace of the celebrated Constable, which extinguished the eldest branch; the marriage of Antoine of Vendôme, chief of the younger branch, with Jeanne d'Albret, heiress of Béarn, of Armagnac, of the county of Foix, and the kingdom of Navarre, raised the fortunes of the family. As well as the Bourbons another princely family grew great, the Guises, a branch of the sovereign House of Lorraine. Claude, fifth son of Duke René of Lorraine, had made himself illustrious in the service of

\* Savoy and Piedmont, divided between France and Spain in virtue of the treaty of Nice, were restored in the year 1602 to the princes of the House of Savoy, except some towns which remained annexed to France until 1574.

† At the time of the French revolution the number of the governments in the provinces was thirty-two.

France. To recompense him, Francis I. erected the lands of Guise into a Duchy and Peerage in his favour. He soon perceived the error he had committed in establishing that foreign race in the kingdom, and we have seen how, on his death-bed, he advised his son to separate it from the government; but it was too late, and never were vassals more formidable to the Kings of France than the ambitious Lorrains. The foreign Houses of Clèves and Savoy had, like that of Lorraine, possessions in France. The first possessed the counties of Eu, Nevers, and RétHEL; the second, the Duchy of Nemours, in Gâtinais; and the third, that of Bar, held under the crown. Calais always belonged to the English; Avignon and the county Venaissin belonged to the Pope; and the Principality of Orange belonged to the House of Nassau.

Possession of  
foreign princes.

There were still considerable fiefs held in France; but, with the exception of the Bourbons and Guises, the great Feudal system, rival of the crown, almost always in a struggle with it, and very often formidable, existed no longer. The great French barons had lost the most part of their regal rights which the crown had nearly everywhere reserved; they had ceased to coin money, to exercise legislative power, to make war on their own account, and found their judicial powers restrained by the royal judges. All political power was taken from them, but a brilliant bondage was offered them at the court, and Francis I., in forcing them to seek his favour as the source of riches and power, had commenced the work of Louis XIV.

Transformation  
of Feudalism.

Another course concurred towards the same end, manners were softened and minds enlightened. In the course of the Italian expeditions, the knights of Charles VIII., of Louis XII., and Francis I., had brought back to the depths of their Feudal keeps the remembrance and the taste for the elegant civilisation which flourished beyond the Alps, and it could be said of conquered Italy, as formerly of Athens, that she ruled her conquerors. The fall of Constantinople had spread abroad throughout Europe, at the same time, the chief works of antiquity, and printing, scarcely discovered, soon multiplied them to infinity. They formed the delight of the sixteenth century, and a new world was revealed to the sons of men, in the Middle Ages. With the treasures or

The Renaissance  
and its influence.

Greek and Latin literature, the chief works of antique art were drawn from the dust where they had lain forgotten, and before these great models, a young school of painters, of sculptors, and of architects was formed, which in its turn produced new marvels. It was this return to the healthy traditions of taste, and this restoration of the beautiful, after so many centuries of darkness and barbarity, that was called the *Renaissance*.

Francis I., above all the princes of Europe, and this was his greatest glory, encouraged this grand movement of the human mind. His mother, Louisa of Savoy, had died, leaving the prodigious sum of fifteen hundred thousand gold crowns, the fruit of her exactions and sordid economy. This treasure passed almost entirely into the hands of poets and artists; but Francis I. had too exalted a soul to believe that gold was sufficient to recompense genius, and it was by his respect and by honours, that he expressed his admiration for the great men whom he loved to have around him. It was thus that he named Leonardo da Vinci his father, and that he wished to close his eyes. Inspired by his charming sister, Marguérite of Navarre, who herself cultivated literature with success, he drew into France a great number of literary and artistic celebrities. Some, like the learned Lascaris, were Greek; others, like the poet Alamanni, and the historian Michael Bruto, were illustrious exiles from the republics of Italy. In the first rank of Italian celebrities called into France, Leonardo da Vinci might be distinguished; William Cop, principal physician to the King, was a Swiss. Among the number of Frenchmen whose works he encouraged, must be cited the learned William Budé, first professor of philology in France; the brothers Bellay, negotiators and historians; the poet Clement Masot, and the great printer, Henry Estienne. About this time also, the celebrated Rabelais, Curé of Meudon, wrote his satirical works. Dumoulin, Cujas, great jurisconsults, might then have been heard, and the chief works of the sculptors John Goujon, Germain Pilon, and John Cousin, sculptor and painter on glass, might have been admired. Pierre Lescot commenced the new Louvre and Philibert Delorme the Tuileries. Under the eyes of Francis I. arose, in part, the Palaces of Fontainebleau and Chambord. But among all his creations those which threw most brilliancy on his reign were the

Celebrated men  
in arts, literature,  
and science.

foundation of the royal printing office, and that of the College of France, then called the Royal College. Until this period the Sorbonne and the University of Paris had alone the right of spreading knowledge abroad. Chairs of Greek and Hebrew, next of Latin eloquence, and of the Arabian and Chaldean

Foundation of  
the College of  
France.

languages were first created; mathematics, medicine, and Greek philosophy had their professors in due course. The King desired to place at the head of this college the celebrated Erasmus, the finest mind, and the most learned man of his century, but he could not seduce him by his offers. Francis I., by his cultivated tastes, by his laudable efforts, and his noble aspirations, associated himself with all his strength in the great movement of the Renaissance, he thus raised himself in the eyes of posterity, who without that perhaps, and in spite of all the interest which his heroism, his bravery, and his misfortunes inspired, would have inclined rather to look upon him as a despot, without scruple, without breeding, and without pity. Happy are the Kings who love literature

## CHAPTER III.

## REIGN OF HENRY II.

1547-1559.

HENRY II., son of Francis I., was twenty-nine years of age when he ascended the throne. He despised the counsels of his father, changed the counsellors of the Crown, and recalled near to him the Constable Montmorency, whom he named his gossip, and who ruled him during all his reign. The Duchess of Etampes was exiled and sent back to her husband; her partisans only redeeming themselves from death, prison, or exile by ceding their castles, their lands, and their offices to the new favourites. The Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, his brother; Montmorency; Diana of Poitiers, styled the Mistress of the King; lastly, the Queen, Catherine de Medici, endowed with a supple and profoundly dissimulating mind, were at the head of each of the four factions which divided the court.

One of the first edicts of the new king condemned blasphemers to have the tongue pierced with a red-hot iron, and heretics to be burnt alive. Another edict assigned to the prévôts of the marshals, assisted by a commission of judges chosen in the tribunals, the trial of assassins, smugglers, poachers, and people who were not known. This edict despoiled the parliament of its special attributes and delivered over the lives of the citizens to arbitrary judgment. The magistrates made ineffectual remonstrances; but, compelled to yield, they registered it with this clause: *in consequence of the malice of the time*. A serious revolt broke out in the provinces of Outre-Loire, where the tax upon salt had been recently established by Francis I. Poitou and Guienne rose; at Bordeaux, above all, the populace committed great excesses. They repulsed the garrison of the Château Trompette and massacred its commandant, whose body

Accession of  
Henry II., 1547.  
  
Despotic edicts.  
  
Revolts in Poitou  
and Guienne,  
1554.

they tore into pieces. The King promised justice and satisfaction; the people were appeased, and the parliament punished the seditious. Montmorency was charged by the King to render the justice which he had promised, or rather to exercise his vengeance upon them. "*Behold my keys*," said he to the Bordelais, showing them his guns; and he entered Bordeaux as into a conquered city. All the bourgeois, tried by commission, perished by executions; all colonels of the communes were broken on the wheel alive, with a crown of red-hot iron upon their heads. The whole town, attainted and convicted of felony, lost its privileges; its bells were taken down, and the fronts of the walls; a hundred and twenty of the principal inhabitants were condemned to dig up with their nails the body of the slaughtered officer, and the inhabitants paid two hundred thousand livres for the expenses of the expedition. Montmorency visited the district more as an executioner than a judge of the provinces which had revolted, and everywhere his passage was marked by gibbets. Bordeaux only recovered its privileges in the following year.

France had hardly taken breath for a year, when war broke out anew. Henry II. supported Ottavio Farnese, Duke of Parma, against Pope Julius III. and the Emperor. The latter, without disquietude on the part of France, had gained, in 1547, the famous battle of Muhlberg over the

Henry II.  
declares war  
against the Pope  
and the Emperor,  
1551.

confederates of Smalcalde. The venerable Frederic, Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave of Hesse, had fallen into his power. Charles V. compelled the former to cede his Electorate, which he gave to Maurice of Saxony, son-in-law of the Landgrave. Germany was yielding, and the Protestant League had no other hope than in France; it implored the support of Henry II., who granted it on condition that he should occupy the town of Cambrai and the three bishoprics of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, to guard them as vicar of the Empire. He soon seized them; then, placing on his flag, as the symbol of liberty, a red cap between two daggers, he declared himself the defender of German independence and protector of the captive princes; but, following the example of his father, condemning at home that which he encouraged among foreigners, he caused the Edict of Chateaubriand to be published, which aggravated all the punishments of heretics, authorized

He seizes the  
bishoprics of  
Metz, Toul, and  
Verdun, 1552.

secret prosecutions regarding individual opinions, and established an inquisitor of the faith.

An unexpected success rendered the support of Henry II. unnecessary to the Lutherans of Germany. Young Maurice of Saxony, cried down in his country as a traitor and usurper, preferred the rôle of Chief of the Protestants to that of a creature of Charles V. A profound dissimulation covered his projects. When he believed

Reverses of  
Charles V.

himself strong enough, he raised the mask and marched in forced journeys upon Inspruck, where the emperor,

ill and almost alone, was nearly taken by surprise. Compelled to

Convention of  
Passau, 1552.

yield, Charles signed, with the Protestants, the Convention of Passau, changed three years later, at the

Diet of Augsburg, into a definite peace. The era of religious liberty in Germany dates from that time.

France had no part in these great events; but she preserved the price of her alliance, in keeping the three bishoprics, in spite of the efforts of the emperor to take them. Hostilities were still prolonged

Continuation of  
hostilities  
between the  
Empire and  
France.

between that prince and Henry II. for three years, with varied success, in Piedmont, Italy, Corsica, upon the frontiers of the North and East, and on the sea. The principal events of the war were:—the immortal defence

of Metz by the Duke of Guise, in 1552, against Charles V., who

Military opera-  
tions, 1552–1555.

besieged that place with a hundred thousand soldiers and a formidable artillery; the raising of that siege

when the emperor lost forty thousand men; the invasion of Picardy by the imperial army, and of Hainault by the French army; the conquest of Hesdin by Henry II.; the loss of Théroutenne, which Charles V. razed to the ground; the battle of Renti, in Flanders, between these two sovereigns—a glorious combat, but of little advantage to the French, where Guise, Coligny, and Tavannes distinguished themselves; lastly, the defence of Sienna by Montluc, the ravaging of the coasts of Italy by Dragut, an Ottoman admiral allied with the French, and the fine campaign made in Piedmont against the Duke of Alba by Marshal Brissac, the most humane among the generals of his time.

After these wars, the advantages of which were equally balanced, and in the course of the great troubles in Germany caused by the death



of Maurice of Saxony, and the rivalry between Charles V. and his brother Ferdinand, King of the Romans and hereditary sovereign of Bohemia, there was opened at Augsburg a celebrated Diet, which ought to have followed immediately after the Convention of Passau. The emperor, burdened with his affairs and maladies, left the presidency of the Diet to his brother Ferdinand, whose language on that occasion was very different from that which he ordinarily used. "They could no longer expect," said he, "from a General Council a religious peace which the Council of Trent had not been able to establish, and it would be still more difficult to bring the German ecclesiastics to an unanimity of feeling in a national council; it was, then, from the Diet itself that it was necessary to demand this work of prudence and of charity." The Diet then took into consideration the state of religion. It was decreed that the Catholic and Protestant States should exercise their worship in freedom; that the Catholic clergy should renounce all spiritual jurisdiction over the States professing the Confession of Augsburg; that the ecclesiastical goods seized before the Treaty of Passau should be left to their actual possessors; that the civil power of each State should regulate its doctrine and religion, but that it should give entire liberty to every German who would not conform to the regulations to retire in peace whither he pleased with his fortune. Such was, in great part, the decree of the Diet of Augsburg of the 25th of September, 1555, and upon it, for a long time, the religious peace of Germany reposed. This decree struck a fatal blow at the policy of Charles V. whose object was always to maintain the unity of the Church under his sole dependence. Tormented by his disgraces as much as by his infirmities, incapable of work, and convinced that all would perish when he could not direct everything himself, he convoked the Chiefs of the Low Countries at Brussels, and there, on the 25th of October, 1555, he solemnly abdicated his hereditary crown, and placed it in the hands of Philip II., his son. He still held the Imperial crown for six months; then he retired to the Convent of the Hieronymites of Saint Just, where he died, after having caused the Office for the Dead to be sung around his coffin while he was still living. His brother Ferdinand,

Diet of  
Augsburg, 1555.

Celebrated  
edict of the Diet  
for the establish-  
ment of the  
religious peace,  
1555.

Abdication of  
Charles V.,  
1555.

King of the Romans, was his successor in the empire. Philip II. had married, in the preceding year, Mary, Queen of England, daughter of Henry VIII. and of Catherine of Aragon. Husband and wife vied with each other throughout their possessions in supporting Catholicism by the Inquisition and by funeral piles.

As soon as Philip had ascended the throne, Henry II. signed a treaty with him at Vaucelles, of which the principal clause was a truce of five years. The people received the news with transport; but their joy was short. It was from Rome that the new germs of discord arose. A contradictory treaty had been concluded between Henry and the Pope, some months before that of Vaucelles. Paul IV., whom his nephews, the Caraffi, urged on to outrageous severities, in order to provoke to their profit confiscations, and to stir up a war between the Empire and France, suspected Charles V., before his abdication, with having wished to kill him; he declared him a poisoner in full consistory, and invited Henry II. to avenge him, promising to him, by a treaty signed at Rome, the investiture of the kingdom of Naples.

Two parties then divided the Court of France; the one, stimulated by the Cardinal Caraffa, nephew of the Pope, demanded the carrying out of the treaty of Rome; the other, the maintenance of that of Vaucelles. All the young nobility wished for war; Montmorency was inclined for peace, and, partaking in this respect the wishes of the people, he wisely advised the King to maintain it. Hostilities broke out suddenly between the Pope and the Spaniards, and war was resolved upon.

A French army, under the orders of the Constable and his nephew, Coligny, entered into Artois, and another into Italy, under the Duke of Guise. The first gave battle near Saint Quentin, to Philibert, Duke of Savoy, chief of the Spanish and English forces; it was completely vanquished through the fault of the Constable Montmorency. A charge of cavalry which the Counts of Egmont and Horn commanded, decided the victory. The French lost ten thousand men, their baggage, and the convoys, the road to Paris was open; the indecision of the conquerors saved France from great disasters. Guise was soon re-called from Italy, and signalised his return by a memorable exploit; he surprised Calais and

Contradictory  
treaties of Vau-  
celles and Rome,  
1555.

Re-commence-  
ment of hostili-  
ties, 1557.

Battle of Saint  
Quentin, 1558.

took possession of it. This town, which had so often introduced foreigners into the kingdom, had remained for two hundred and ten years in the power of the English. France lost in the same year the battle of Gravelines, when the old Marshal Thermes was conquered by the Count of Egmont. These two events were followed by the peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, signed in 1559. It was called *The Unfortunate Peace*. Henry II. gave up his conquests with the exception of the three bishoprics; he renounced all his rights upon Genoa, Corsica, the kingdom of Naples, and only retained in Piedmont Pignerol, and some fortresses. This treaty, far from glorious, but necessary, terminated the wars in Italy. Their principal results have been to hold in check the House of Austria, and to prevent it from subduing Germany by occupying its forces in Italy. They initiated the French in the progress of civilization and of the arts in that country, and also in its corrupt policy, without permitting it to make any durable establishment; they increased and fortified the royal authority, and rendered it absolute by the continual employment of numerous armies, permanent and paid. These wars were prolonged over four reigns, and lasted sixty-five years.

The Duke of Guise retakes Calais, 1558.

Battle of Gravelines, 1558, Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, end of the wars in Italy, 1558.

Their results.

France would have been happy, if it had known how to turn to profit this peace with the foreigner. Its finances were exhausted, and Henry, in order to provide for the expenses of the war and those of a prodigal and dissolute court, had recourse to deplorable expedients. He sold by auction the offices of the *presidials* or inferior tribunals, which he created and multiplied in the provinces. He established with the same aim and by the same means a Parliament in Brittany, caused an edict of inquisition to be bought by the clergy, sold a multitude of new offices, ordered that the titles or provisions of a crowd of public officers should be revised, and compelled them to buy them anew; he authorised the towns extraordinarily taxed to create annuities upon themselves; lastly, he dared to give the name of States-General to an assembly of notable persons, chosen by himself and devoted to his will, and he disguised under the name of loans, the taxes that he exacted from them.

Sale of offices.

Exactions of Henry II.

The Edict of Inquisition which he sold to the clergy was not executed. Already, however, the Inquisitor, Matthew Ori, had been named by the Pope; but the Parliament of Paris made an energetic resistance. This was not because it felt any pity for the Sectarrians; its severities against them were excessive; but it was jealous of its rights, and did not wish that another tribunal should have the privilege of prosecuting heresy and punishing it. Henry did not support his edict and the inquisition did not take root in France.

The foreign war had, towards the end of this reign, wrought some relaxation in the Catholic persecutions. The Protestants grew bold, religious zeal served as a mask to the ambition of some; many princes of the Blood Royal, and with them illustrious warriors and magistrates embraced the new belief. Taking confidence in their forces, they assembled openly in Paris itself. The promenade of the Pré aux Clercs was used as their place of meeting; there they would be met singing in a loud voice the Psalms, translated into French by Clément Marot.

Progress of Protestantism in France.

Promenade of the Pré aux Clercs.

The court and the clergy feared above all that the Parliament, charged with the punishment of heresy, would not allow itself to be forced. The powerful Cardinal of Lorraine then persuaded the King that it was necessary that he should summon the Parliament to the throne, in order to propose a *Mercuriale* for the purpose of censuring many magistrates who adhered to the doctrine of Luther, and allowed those convicted of heresy to escape without condemning a single one to death; which was contrary to the decree of the late King, who prescribed them to be burnt and reduced to ashes. "Then that would only show," said the Cardinal, "to the King of Spain that you are firm in the faith; further, you ought to do it boldly and promptly, for the purpose of giving pleasure to the Princes and Lords of Spain who have accompanied the Duke of Alba, in order to solemnize and give honour to the marriage of their King with madame your daughter. I recommend the death of a half-dozen counsellors at least, who must be burnt in public, like heretic Lutherans, as they are, and who destroy that excellent body the Parliament. But if you do not adopt these

Exhortation of the Cardinal of Lorraine to Henry II.

means, all the court will soon be infected, even to the ushers, proctors, and clerks of the palace." The King listened to this advice and made arrangements to call together the Parliament on the morrow; but having, in the evening, communicated his project to his counsellor, Vieilleville, the latter gave advice that he should leave the matter to the Cardinal of Lorraine, and the Bishop of Paris. "It belongs to the priests," said he, "to do that which belongs to the office of the priest; if you go, Sire, to perform the office of a theologian or inquisitor of the faith, the Cardinal of Lorraine must come to teach you how to run in the lists, and how to manage weapons. Further, Sire, you will mingle sadness with joy; for to cause executions of justice so sanguinary and cruel in the midst of the wedding festivities, would be a bad augury." The King accepted these reasons, and said that he would not go; but the Cardinal of Lorraine, hearing of this resolution, entered in fury. Vieilleville relates also, in his memoirs, the continuation of this tragic event. "At the rising of the King," he says, "the Cardinals of Bourbon, Lorraine, of Guise, and of Pelvé, the Archbishops of Sens, and of Bourges, the Bishops of Senlis, three or four doctors of Sorbonne, and the inquisitor of the faith, who threatened him so strongly with the anger of God, that he thought himself already damned if he did not go. And so he marched with all his guards, the drum beating, without forgetting the Swiss, and the hundred gentlemen of the house, in great magnificence. Having gone down to the Augustines, where the Parliament was assembled, he ascended into the great chamber and sat on the throne, under the canopy, and commanded his attorney-general to propose the *mercuriales*. The latter soon attacked five or six counsellors, badly disposed to the faith, among whom was one Anne of Bourg, who sustained so audaciously before the King his religion to the disparagement of Catholicism, that His Majesty swore, in great anger, that he would see him, with his own eyes, burnt alive before six days were over, and ordered him to be taken prisoner to the Bastille, with five or six others; then he rose, ordering the assembly to proceed with the rest. Arrived at Tournelles, he repented not having believed M. Vieilleville; for in the streets he heard many who murmured at this enterprise, on account of the counsellors who had been made prisoners,

*Celebrated Mercuriale, 1559.*

*Arrest of Anne of Bourg, and of Louis of Faur, 1559.*

and who were of the better families of Paris, and who administered justice to all parties, very conscientiously.”\*

The counsellor, Louis of Faur, was in the number of the magistrates arrested in their seats. Henry placed them all in the hands of Montgommery, captain of his guards, and made him give instructions for their trial.

The French Calvinists held at this period their first Synod, and regulated the constitutions which should maintain in union their scattered societies, and rule them under the same discipline. The King received the news in the midst of the fêtes of the marriage of Elizabeth, his daughter, with Philip II., widower of Queen Mary Tudor of England. He swore that he would punish those whom he considered as rebels. His death prevented the accomplishment of his vow. Wounded in the eye, at a joust, by the lance of Montgommery, he died of the wound after a reign of twelve years. He left four sons, of whom three wore the crown. Francis, the eldest, had married Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, celebrated as much for her misfortunes as for her beauty.

Henry II. had in his character neither grandeur nor virtue. Intimidated by the Guises, and ruled by Montmorency, the slave of his mistress and his favourites, he poured out on them the treasures of the State, introduced an unrestrained licentiousness into his court,

\* Vieilleville became Marshal of France, and honoured his country by his tolerance, and the nobility of his character. Receiving one day a brevet, by which the King granted to him and five other gentlemen, among whom were M.M. Aphem and de Biron, the confiscated goods of all the Lutherans of the countries of Guienne, Limousin, Quercy, Perigord, Saintonge and Aunis, of which the product would be at least 20,000 crowns for each, he answered, “that he did not wish to enrich himself by so odious and sinister a means, that he found in it no trace of dignity, and still less of charity . . . .” “Behold us, then, registered in the Courts of Parliament with a reputation of destroyers of the people, besides having, for 20,000 crowns each, the curses of an infinity of married women, maidens, and little children, who will die in the hospitals through the confiscation, right or wrong, of the persons and goods of their husbands and fathers: that would be to plunge into the abyss of hell cheaply.” That said, he drew his dagger, and plunged it into the brevet in the place of his name. M. Aphem, reddening with shame, drew his likewise, and across his own appointment; M. de Biron did not do less. And all three went away, drawing each one on his own side without saying a word, leaving the brevet to any one who wished to take it, for it had fallen to the ground. (*Mémoires de Vieilleville.*)

already corrupted by his father, he oppressed the people without pity, violated the rights of the magistracy, obtained no personal military glory, and left the kingdom forty millions in debt.\* The ignorance and the misery of the people, the increasing embarrassment of the finances, the scandals of the court, the Protestant proselytism on the one part, and on the other the Catholic intolerance, prepared the volcanic field, where great talents and great ambitions came to clash together under the following reigns. The struggle lasted thirty-six years, and covered France with ruins.

\* This sum would be equivalent to 160 millions at the present day, specie then having a quadruple value of that existing at the present time.

## BOOK II.

### FROM THE ACCESSION OF FRANCIS II. TO THE DEATH OF HENRY IV.

RELIGIOUS WARS.—THE LEAGUE.—END OF THE DYNASTY OF THE VALOIS.—  
ACCESSION OF THE BOURBONS.—REIGN OF HENRY IV.

1559-1610.

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#### CHAPTER I.

REIGNS OF FRANCIS II. AND CHARLES IX.

1559-1574.

#### FRANCIS II.

FRANCIS II. ascended the throne at the age of sixteen years, and under this reign and the following one was seen anew the dangers of the law formed by Charles V., which fixed the majority of the Kings at their adolescence. The reigns of Charles VI. and Charles VIII., already sufficiently attested that the power, in the young age of the Kings, belonged, in spite of their legal majority, to any one who knew how to seize it. Under Francis II. there were the Guises, princes of the House of Lorraine, and uncles of the young Queen Mary Stuart, who divided all the authority with Catherine de Medici, one of them, the Cardinal, had a cruel and haughty spirit; the other was the famous Francis, Duke of Guise, whose prudence equalled his intrepidity, already illustrated by the fine defence of Metz, and the taking of Calais, and dear to the French by his great qualities. The two brothers, however, showed themselves

Power of the  
Guises, 1559.



equally ungrateful towards Diana of Poitiers, their benefactress. It was by sacrificing her that they bought the favour of Catherine de Medici. The characteristic trait of this Queen, who played so great a part under the reigns of her three sons, was a profound dissimulation, united with an intriguing and corrupt spirit.\* Nurtured in Italy in the school of Macchiavelli, and the Borgias, she set in operation from the throne their fatal policy, of which the misfortunes of France attested the impotence, while at the same time they unveiled its infamy. The party opposed to Catherine and the princes of Lorraine, was that of Anthony of Bourbon, King of Navarre, and of Louis of Condé, his brother, both princes of the Blood Political parties. Royal, issue of Robert, Count of Clermont, youngest son of Saint Louis; it was to them that the old Constable of Montmorency, without credit at the court, and disgraced by the queen-mother, came and rallied against the Guises. Origin of the House of Bourbon.

A great number of French nobles, indignant at seeing all the authority usurped by princes of the foreign House of Lorraine, increased the party of the royal princes; secret conferences were held at Vendôme, between all the Malcontents, the object of which was to convoke the States-General, and take away the power from the Guises. The latter, informed concerning these hostile projects, and knowing the weakness of Anthony of Bourbon, prevented the danger by intimidating that prince. Invited by Catherine to defend her government, the King of Spain, Philip II., had answered that, should it cost him forty thousand men, he would sustain, in France, the authority of the King and his ministers. His letter, read in full council before the King of Navarre, frightened that feeble prince, who accepted the mission to conduct to the frontier the sister of Francis II., Elizabeth of France, in order to place her in the hands of the King of Spain, her husband, and was happy so to escape from the peril of his own resolutions.

The Guises triumphed; they then hastened to work out the destruction of Protestantism in France, and caused the trial of the counsellor Anne of Bourg to be proceeded with. This great cause

\* She appeared indifferent to power when she was most covetous of it; incapable of a sincere affection, she deceived equally friends and foes. There was for her neither security nor pleasure, if she did not incite, renew, or perpetuate discords. (Charles Lacratelle, *Histoire de France pendant les guerres de religion.*)

Trial of Anne of  
Bourg, 1559.

held public attention, not only in Paris, but in Europe. The Protestant party became agitated; the queen-mother received alarming warnings; many princes of Germany also were moved in favour of the accused, and wrote in order to save him. The Guises, aware that Bourg would be more formidable if he died a martyr to his faith than if he lived abjuring it, set to work so that he should consent to recant. The advocate charged with his defence confessed in his name that he had offended God and the Church, and that he was ready to reconcile himself with it; the judges immediately, and without wishing to hear Bourg himself, held council in order to grant his pardon. While they deliberated, a note from his hand was delivered to them. Bourg disavowed the conclusions of his advocate, and persisted in his faith, which he was ready to confirm with his blood. From that time his fate was sealed; still, he could not perish without being avenged; it was unfortunately by an assassin. The President, Minard, his enemy, and one of his judges, was killed by a pistol-shot. This was the sinister signal for a bloody persecution. Sentence of death was soon pronounced against Bourg; he heard it read with heroic constancy, and answered by the cry of the martyrs, "I am a Christian! I am a Christian!" His eloquent farewell drew tears from his judges.

Assassination of  
the President  
Minard.

Execution of  
Anne of Bourg.

He was executed on the next day, the 23rd of December; they spared him the pain of the fire, having the grace to strangle him before throwing him into the flames.

The death of Bourg seemed to give a new activity to the persecution. The Cardinal of Lorraine designed, as he had already done for Francis I., a particular chamber, charged with punishing the reformers. Fire was the chastisement which it pronounced against them, and the cruelty of its judgments gave to it the frightful nickname of the *Burning Chamber*.

The burning  
chamber.

The peace of Cateau-Cambrésis had left without employment a crowd of gentlemen and soldiers, whose only resource was war. A great number came to the court to petition, some for that which was due to them, and others for pensions and pardons. Importuned by their demands and their misery, the Cardinal of Lorraine caused a gibbet to be erected, at the entrance to the Château of Fontainebleau, with a threat that he would hang those petitioners who

had not left the court on the following day. They moved away, but they promised to present to the *Lorrains* \* complaints of another sort. These men, among whom were many people without name, united with the nobles who were enemies to the tyranny of the Guises, and formed with them the party of *Malcontents*, which doubled its forces by allying itself with the Protestants. The latter, counted with pride in their ranks the Prince of Condé, a man of heart and head, brother of the King of Navarre, and the three brothers Châtillon, of whom the eldest, Admiral Coligni, The Châtillons. of austere manners, of an immovable firmness, skilful in repairing his reverses without ever despairing, was the most illustrious among the Protestant chiefs of France; Audelot, one of his brothers, celebrated for his bravery, commanded the French infantry; his other brother, Odet Châtillon, a skilful diplomatist, had secretly embraced the reformed faith and was married, although he was Bishop of Beauvais, and Cardinal. The ability of the three brothers, their offices and alliances, soon rendered formidable the party which had adopted them as chiefs, and who reckoned already on the tacit concurrence of the Prince of Condé.

A vast plot, known in history under the name of the *Conspiracy of Amboise*, was then formed in secret by the enemies of the government, Catholic and Protestant. Both one and the other bound themselves by an oath to attempt nothing against the Conspiracy of Amboise, 1560. King, the Queen, or the authority of the laws. Their object was to carry off the King, to remove him from the influence of the Guises, to arrest the latter, and to cause them to be tried as guilty of high treason. An adroit and bold gentleman, named Renandi, was chosen as the apparent chief of the enterprise, which he conducted with great skill. The real chief, known only under the name of the *Dumb Captain*, was the Prince of Condé. From all parts bands of armed men were set in movement, without being in the secret of the conspirators. The Guises, under vague suspicion, removed the court from the Château of Blois to that of Amboise. The conspirators persevered in their project with an incredible audacity. An advocate, named Avenelles, a friend of Renandi, revealed their design; and while this

\* The Guises, Princes of the House of Lorraine, were commonly designated by this name.

news still held the Guises and their court in stupefaction, the conspirators, informed of the treachery, marched forward and directed the courses of the different bands upon the Château of Amboise, on the 16th of March, 1560. Already the town was filled with troops called together in haste by the Guises. Coligni and Condé found themselves both one and the exposed to an extreme defiance. Condé, overlooking closely, received the order to defend some posts. Combats then took place, and were unfortunate for the conspirators; the Guises rushed upon a crowd of men, who ran according to the order of their chiefs and conspirators, without knowing the reason why; the party was dispersed and the executions began.

Defeat of the  
conspirators.

Whatever name is given to this enterprise, whatever motive is supposed for it, it was culpable, since it tended to overthrow by violence a government legally established. However, the barbarities exercised upon the captives, and the constancy with which they held firm, excited interest for them and horror for their executioners. The vengeance of the Guises were atrocious. The waters of the Loire carried away a multitude of corpses, which floated fastened together with long poles; the streets of Amboise ran with human blood. The Conspirators marched boldly to death; some were killed without even having heard their sentence. One of the principal, the Lord of Castelneau, gave himself up to the Duke of Nemours, with fifteen of his companions, on condition that he should do them no harm; the Guises caused them to be condemned like the rest. Nemours interposed vainly to save them, they all died. Castelneau dipped his hands on the scaffold into the blood of his decapitated companions, and, lifting them to Heaven, all wet with blood, he cried to God for vengeance upon those who had betrayed him, and upon the Chancellor Olivier who had condemned him. The latter, secretly attached to the conspirators, had been compelled to exercise against them the vengeance of the Guises. "In listening to the words of Castelneau, whom he had loved, he wept, and, seized with remorse, he fell ill of an extreme melancholy, which made him sigh without ceasing, and murmur against God, afflicting his person in a strange and dreadful manner. While he was in this furious despair, the Cardinal of Lorraine came to visit him, but he would

Vengeances of  
the Guises.

not see him, and turned on the other side, without saying a word; when he knew that he was far off," he cried out:—"Ah! cursed Cardinal! you damn yourself and us along with you." Two days afterwards he died.\* For a month they did nothing but behead, hang, and drown. Condé himself was in peril; he prayed for his audacity by justifying himself before the King; he caused his accusers to be silent, but not the suspicions, and civil war appeared imminent.

The two parties met together in arms at Fontainebleau, where the Guise had convoked the principal magistrates to consult concerning the means of establishing peace. Coligni in this assembly presented uselessly a petition in the name of fifty thousand *Religionnaires*,† who supplicated that temples should be granted to them, and the permission to pray to God according to their hearts. The assembly requested the States-General, and the Princes of Lorraine acquiesced in this wish. On both sides plots were woven. Orléans had been fixed upon as the place of meeting for the States; the King betook himself there with a threatening display. The two Bourbon Princes were drawn there by the Guises. The King of Navarre ran the risk of his life in an audience which Francis II. gave him, and Condé was made prisoner. A commission, appointed by the Guises, and presided over by Christopher of Thou, father of the historian, condemned Condé to lose his head. The death of the feeble Francis II., whom a disease of exhaustion consumed away, prevented the execution of the prince.

Assembly at  
Fontainebleau,  
1560.

States of Orléans,  
1560.

Condemnation of  
the Prince of  
Condé, 1560.

Death of Fran-  
cis II., 1560.

This reign finished under the most sinister auspices. If one man could have conjured down the tempest that was about to burst, it would have been the wise and virtuous Michael of the Hospital, ancient superintendent of the finances, and successor to Olivier in charge of the chancellorship of the kingdom; he belonged to those men who present a beautiful type in the moral order, and who seem born to soften down the evils of humanity.‡ He made the greatest

\* De Vieilleville, *Mémoires*.

† All those of the reformed religion were designated by this name.

‡ "He was," says Brauté, "another Cato the Censor, who knew very well how

efforts to prevent the Guises from introducing into France the execrable tribunal of the Inquisition, but he could only succeed in it by publishing the Edict of Romorantin, which attributed to the prelates of the kingdom the knowledge of the crimes of heresy (May, 1560). The Parliamēt modified this Edict before registering it, and permitted the laity to have recourse to the judge royal.

Edict of Romorantin, 1560.

#### CHARLES IX.

Charles IX. was only ten years old when he succeeded his brother, Francis II. The States-General were still assembled at Orléans, and only took a feeble part in political affairs; however, it decreed the regency to Catherine of Médicis, and recognised the King of Navarre in his quality as Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. The Chancellor L'Hospital exercised a wise influence upon the States, and he leant upon them in order to cause the ordinance called that of Orléans to be issued. It was celebrated for the excellent arrangements touching ecclesiastical matters, the administration of justice, and the police of the kingdom. This ordinance re-established the ordinances proscribed by the Pragmatic Sanction for the election of the bishops; but its arrangements in this respect were not observed for any length of time. L'Hospital had refused to sign the arrest which condemned to death the prince of Condé. Médicis, by her counsel, declared Condé innocent of the crime of which he was accused, and Montmorency was recalled to the court, where, nevertheless, the Guises remained powerful and formidable.

The queen-mother played fast and loose between the two parties, at one time relying on the Guises and the Catholics, and at another attaching herself to the Protestants and the Bourbons against the Guises. The latter sought the support of the gloomy and cruel Philip II., King of Spain, the firmest champion of Catholicism in the

to reprove and correct the corrupt world. He showed it in all his outward appearance, with his great white beard, his pale face, and his grave expression, so that one would have said that to see him, was to see a true portrait of Saint Hierosone: so said many at the Court."

whole of Europe, and who already, under the preceding reign, had declared himself protector of the kingdom of France. The Guises felt equally the want of again attaching to themselves the Constable. They knew that in the eyes of this old warrior, all interest disappeared before that of the Catholic religion. They showed to him that it was in peril, and he entered into their views. The Marshal of Saint André was also gained over to the side of the Lorraine princes, and formed, with the Constable and Francis of Guise, a The Triumvirate. league which received the name of the Triumvirate.

Then appeared an edict, dated in the month of July, which granted to the Protestants an amnesty for the past, and ordered them to live in the Catholic religion, under pain of prison and exile; Edict of July, 1561. death would no longer be pronounced against them.

This edict only made malcontents, and was never observed. The Queen endeavoured to bring together Francis of Guise and Condé; they embraced each other, but remained mortal enemies.

The States-General assembled in the course of the year at Pontoise. The electors were assembled by province, and not by States of Pontoise, 1561. bailiwick, and each of the thirteen provinces having only named one deputy from each order, thirty-nine members alone sat in the States. They voted for the election of the prelates by the chapters, and the abolition of the Annates, and caused the greater part of the public offices to fall to the clergy. That order, fearing the most severe measures with regard to its immense wealth, taxed itself with fifteen millions, which it offered as a free gift. In the meantime, a celebrated assembly was held, under the name of the Conference of Poissy, 1561. Conference of Poissy. Anxious to cause his eloquence and erudition to shine, the Cardinal of Lorraine had invited the Protestant ministers and Calvin himself to open with him and the Catholic bishops' conferences, where the principal points of the two religions should be dilated. Poissy was designated as the scene of this theological struggle. Many French cardinals, forty bishops, and a great number of doctors appeared there; not more than twelve Protestant ministers were there. Calvin did not present himself; he sent in his place Theodore of Beza, the most distinguished of his disciples. The discussion finished like all theological disputes; each one remained more firmly fixed than ever in his own opinion.

The Edict of July was not observed in any part; the Protestants braved it openly, and united together in a great number of places. Catherine of Médicis then gave an order to all the parliaments to appoint deputies who should assist in forming an edict more suitable to the circumstances. This new assembly was presided over by

Efforts of the  
Chancellor  
L'Hospital to  
secure peace.

L'Hospital, who spoke these beautiful words:—"Try and find out," said he, "if a man can be a good subject of the king without being a Catholic, and if, after all, it is impossible for men who are not of the same belief to live in peace with each other, do not then tire yourselves with searching as to which religion is the best; we are here, not to establish the faith, but to regulate the State."

The wise *Edict of January* was the result of the efforts of the chancellor. It was therein decreed that the Calvinists should give up the usurped churches, the crosses, the images and the relics, and that they should submit to the collection of tithes; it ordered them to keep the fête days, and to respect the exterior acts of the Catholic religion. It permitted them, nevertheless, to meet together, in order to exercise their religion outside the towns, and without arms; it enjoined upon the magistrates to watch lest they caused any disturbances. The parliaments of Rouen, Toulouse, Bordeaux, and Grenoble, with little difficulty registered the Edict; that of Burgundy resisted it; those of Paris, Landguedse, and Dauphine offered a long resistance. This celebrated Edict was welcomed by the Calvinists with an enthusiasm which doubled their confidence; while the Catholics received it in a stern and mournful silence. The peace that it maintained between them was of short duration; each party strengthened and prepared itself for war. The Guises had drawn to them the King of Navarre, whom Philip II. flattered by promising to him Sardinia; while Condé, his brother, declared himself chief of the Protestants, towards whom the queen-mother appeared then to incline. The Catholics, alarmed at the favour which Condé enjoyed, called Guise to Paris. He hastened from Joinville, and passed through the little town of Vassy, in Champagne, at the time when the Protestants were assembled in worship. His fanatical troops fell upon them sword in hand; the Duke of Guise was wounded in the cheek

Edict of  
Tolerance of  
January, 1562.

Massacre of  
Vassy, 1562.



in the tumult, and sixty Calvinists were slaughtered; this massacre became the signal for war.

Guise entered Paris as a conqueror, amid the cheers of the people; Catherine, jealous and troubled concerning her influence, drew nearer to the Protestants, without giving herself opening to them. The two parties, in arms, watched each other for many days in Paris, and the Queen, in order to prevent the shedding of blood, arranged with their chiefs, Guise and Condé, that they should leave the capital; they obeyed, but this was in order to unite their partisans and to prepare themselves for war.

However, the great captain who was then in France, the firmest supporter of reform, the Admiral Coligny, hesitated to take up arms; his brothers, the Cardinal of Châtillon and Audelot, pressed him to join; but he himself thought over all the evils of civil war; he thought with fear of the number of his adversaries, and the weakness of his party and the greatness of the peril. For two days he resisted, when he was awakened at night by the sobs of his wife. It was not on account of herself that she wept, but on account of her husband's wish to abandon his brothers in Jesus Christ, whom she looked upon beforehand as men condemned to die by executions. "To be wise for men," said she, "is not to be wise for God, who has given you the science of captain for the service of his children." Coligni related to her all his just motives and fears, and added:—"Place your hand upon your heart, sound well your conscience, and see if you can put up with general disasters, the outrages of your enemies, the treachery of your own side, flight, exile, your hunger, and that which is harder, that of your children, perhaps, even your death by an executioner, after having seen your husband dragged along and exposed to the ignominy of the vulgar \* \* \* \*. I give you three weeks to try you." "These three weeks are passed," replied that heroic woman; "you will never be conquered by the virtue of your enemies; use your own, and do not have upon your head the deaths of three weeks."\* Coligny departed on the following day with his brothers and joined Condé.

The prince thought of making himself master of the person of Charles IX., the Triumvirate prevented him; they removed the

\* Daubigné, *Notice sur Coligni*.

young king to Fontainebleau, and conducted him to Paris, where Catherine herself accompanied him. The Constable could no longer restrain his fanatical zeal; he advanced into the Faubourgs at the head of his troops, attacked the Protestant churches, and with his own hand set fire to their temples, which were consumed amid the joyous and barbarous cries of the populace. It was thus that the first war was declared. Condé, Admiral Coligny, and his brother Andelot, hastened immediately to Orléans, and assembled there their forces. Both sides had recourse to foreign aid; the Guises were supported by the King of Spain, and they

First civil war,  
1562.  
  
Alliance of the  
two parties with  
foreigners.

bought, at the price of the town of Turin, the support of the Duke of Savoy; the Calvinists negotiated with Elizabeth; they wished to sell to her Dieppe and Havre, and called into France a body of German knights, known by the name of *Reitres*, a great number of nobles, besides the Châtillons, embraced their side; among their ranks might be distinguished Anthony of Croï, La Rochefoucauld, Rohan, Montgommery, Gramont, the one drawn by the true zeal for reform, the others by their hate of the Guises, and by the chances which a civil war offers to all who are ambitious. The army of the Huguenots,\* or Protestants, was remarkable for its fine and severe discipline. No games of hazard, no women of bad reputation, and no marauders were to be seen there; swearing was rigorously forbidden; ministers went amongst the companies and conversed there with religious enthusiasm; but under this austere exterior fermented a fanaticism as gloomy and as cruel as that of the Catholic army. Woe to the vanquished! Woe to the towns taken by either one or the other army! The most frightful atrocities were committed by them in cold blood. Beaugency was carried by assault by the Protestants; Blois, Tours, Poitiers, and Rouen experienced first all the fury of this atrocious war. The town of Rouen, defended by Montgommery, the involuntary murderer of Henry II., had been besieged by the King of Navarre, Anthony of Bourbon, who was slain under its walls. The only glory in this prince is that he was an ancestor of Henry IV. of France.

\* They began then in France to give the name of *Huguenots* to the reformers, by which name they distinguished themselves. This word comes from the German word *eidenossen*, which signifies *confederates*, and which they used among themselves.

Of all the great towns of France which he had taken, Condé only possessed Lyons and Orléans, when the two armies, the one commanded by that prince, and the other by the Constable, met together near to Dreux. They engaged in battle, which was sanguinary. The Constable charged first impetuously; his squadrons were broken by Coligny; Montmorency, surrounded on all sides, remained a prisoner; the Marshal of Saint André was killed in going to his assistance. One part of the Catholic army took to flight, and the Protestants dispersed themselves in pursuit of the vanquished. Then Francis of Guise, up to that time immovable with his cavalry, ran his eyes rapidly over the field of battle. "They are ours!" he cried, and plunged in a gallop upon the astonished Protestants. This unexpected charge decided the victory; Condé himself was made prisoner. This new triumph, the captivity of the Constable, and that of Condé, the death of Anthony of Bourbon, and of Marshal Saint André, rendered Francis of Guise the most powerful man in the kingdom. He was appointed Lieutenant-General, and hastened to march upon Orléans, the siege of which he pressed. This was the end of his success and of his life. A Protestant, John Poltrot of Méré, assassinated him by shooting him with a pistol; his death was the safety of Orléans. Guise terminated his illustrious career by pardoning his murderer, and in seeking to justify himself for the massacre of Vassy. The assassin, in the midst of the most frightful tortures, designated Coligni as his accomplice; but he varied in his confessions, and the grand character of Coligni sufficed to shelter him from the suspicion of being an assassin.\* Henry, son of Francis of Guise, however, received this accusing evidence as a proof, and vowed an implacable hatred against the Admiral.

Desolation weighed heavily upon the towns and the country of France; bands of fierce soldiers covered its soil; the finances were pillaged and commerce destroyed. These calamities, and above all, the ascendancy which the death of Francis of Guise had given to

\* M. Charles Lacretelle has perfectly appreciated the value of the denunciation of Poltrot, in his *Histoire de France durant les guerres de religion* (Book V.); the opinion which he emits, and the motives on which he supports it, do not appear susceptible of refutation.

Condé, led Catherine to propose peace. The Prince, unknown to Coligni, and without sufficient guarantee, which granted to the Protestant seignors and nobles the right to exercise their religion in their seignories or houses. . The bourgeois obtained the liberty of conscience; but they could only exercise their religion in one town of each bailiwick and in the places which were in possession of the Protestants. The death of the Duke of Guise had placed the party of Condé in a position to dictate peace, and this treaty, called the *Convention of Amboise*, was received with indignation by Coligni, by Calvin, and by the Protestant chiefs. "Behold!" said the Admiral, "a dash of the pen which overthrows more churches than the enemy's forces could have destroyed in ten years."

Convention of  
Amboise, 1563.

The Protestant army was dissolved and the *Reîtres* had returned to Germany. Catherine gave them a safe conduct, and attempted to cause them to be massacred on the road. This period only presents a course of prejudice and cruel vengeance. Montluc, among the Catholic chiefs, and the Baron of Adrets, among the Protestants, distinguished themselves by their barbarity, "*One could recognise,*" says the former, in his Memoirs, "*by which way he had passed; for the signs were to be found on the trees by the road-side.*" The second compelled his prisoners to throw themselves from the summit of towers on the pikes of the soldiers.

First alienation  
of the goods of  
the clergy.

Peace was taken advantage of, in order to attack the foreigners. The Constable, at the head of the rest of the royal army, drove the English from Havre, and the clergy paid the expenses of the expedition. Its goods, by the advice of L' Hospital, were alienated to the value of a hundred thousand crowns per annum. This was the first time that such means had been employed in order to provide for the resources of the State. The expenses of that year were valued at eighteen millions, the receipts promised no more than eight, and there was deficit of forty-three millions in the Treasury. Charles IX. entered into his fifteenth year, and his majority was declared. Catherine preserved the power; Condé forgot himself at the court among pleasures, while the Constable, little sought after by the Queen, strove to break the peace by exciting the people anew to massacre the Protestants. Three hundred death judgments were, it is said, signed by his hand;

the Queen baffled this frightful plot. Danville, son of the Constable, Governor of Languedoc, Tavannes, Governor of Burgundy, and many other commandants of provinces, supported the projects of Montmorency. The thunders of the Vatican, the anathemas of the Council of Trent, the entreaties of foreign princes, all excited the passions of the Catholics, and everything presaged that peace would be of short duration. Pope Pius IV. summoned before him many French bishops who had been accused of having embraced reform; among this number was Cardinal Châtillon, Saint Romain, Archbishop of Aix, and Montluc, Bishop of Valence, brother of the redoubtable captain of that name. At the same period Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, and widow of Anthony of Bourbon, having been suspected and convicted of heresy, a bull declared her deprived of her royal dignity, and delivered up the States to the first occupant.

The Council of Trent approached its end, after having existed twenty-one years from its first session. Before dissolving, it issued some important decisions concerning dogmas and discipline. The bishops drew up clear and precise canons, which defined, in an invariable manner, the articles of faith of the Catholics; but they refused all concession to the spirit of the times. France accepted the acts of the council relative to dogmas; it was not the same with regard to discipline, and many articles having been judged, under the opinion of the great juriconsult Dumoulin, contrary to the principles of the Gallican Church, the Parliament of Paris refused to admit them, and did not allow them to be published in the kingdom. The Council was dissolved in December, 1563.

Last acts, and  
end of the  
Council of Trent,  
1563.

In the following year the Queen made a voyage to the provinces of the east and south, and took with her the King and all his court. State affairs were forgotten during this journey, and they passed through ruined towns, and devastated country, in the midst of rejoicings, of festivals, and spectacles. The Duke of Alba came to visit the King at Bayonne, and, in a conversation that he had with the Queen on the means of destroying the Calvinists, he used the following words, which afterwards became famous:—"Ten thousand frogs are not worth the head of a salmon." It was in this manner that he spoke of the principal chiefs of the Protestant party.

Charles IX., on his return, assembled at Moulins an assembly of the principal inhabitants, to which were summoned for the purpose of conciliation, the Duke of Guise, Admiral Coligni, and a great number of princes and seignors, also the presidents of the different parliaments. During the session of this assembly, L'Hospital caused many celebrated ordinances to be passed, known under the name of the *Edicts of Moulins*. One of them, in eighty-six articles, was a code of reformation for justice, based on principles full of moderation and equity; another ordinance recalled the ancient principles of the monarchy, in so far as it touched the inalienability of the crown domain;\* but all the efforts of L'Hospital failed in bringing together the Guises and the Châtillons. The latter had only too much cause for alarm; everywhere the Convention of Amboise was violated by the Catholics, and the infractions remained unpunished. Catherine negotiated with Philip II. for the destruction of the Protestant chiefs, and redoubled the injurious suspicions with regard to them. The creation of the French guards dates from this period; they were composed of ten companies of fifty men; the Swiss guards, created by Louis XI., were at the same time strongly augmented. These precautions gave umbrage to the Protestants; they had warning of the project of their enemies, and sought to prevent them. Médicis suspected their design, and charged some of her trusty followers to act as spies over the Admiral. They found him, on the 26th of September, in his working dress, *gathering in his vintage*; - and on the 28th, fifty places were in his power. The King, nearly taken by surprise at Monceaux, by Condé, gained Meaux in all haste, then Paris, under the protection of six thousand Swiss. The cavalry of Condé hovered constantly round the escort, and the second civil war was declared.

Assembly of  
chief inhabitants  
at Moulins, 1564.

Ordinances of  
Moulins, 1564.

Second civil war,  
1567.

Battle of Saint  
Denis, 1567.

The battle of Saint Denis followed closely these first hostilities. The advantage rested with the Catholics, but it cost them dear; the old Constable there lost his life. He

\* Etienne Parquier said the ordinances of L'Hospital surpassed everything of the kind that he had previously seen, and the Chancellor Aguesseau, made this eulogy, that they had been the cause of all the ameliorations obtained in French legislation.

had been famous under four reigns; no illustrious warrior of that period had shown more devotion to his kings; but his intolerant and fierce zeal for religion, rendered him guilty of great acts of violence. The battle of Saint Denis had no decisive result.

The Duke of Anjou, brother of the King, was proclaimed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, although he was only sixteen years old, and Prince Casimir, of the Palatine House, at the head of a numerous body of Reitres, joined the Protestants. The latter, animated by the example of their chiefs, despoiled themselves of their jewels and money in order to pay these useful allies. Catherine, seeing them in force, again made advances for peace, offering permission for the exercise of the reformed religion by replacing the *Convention of Amboise* in vigour, and to pay the Germans, if the places taken were restored. These conditions were accepted; contrary to the advice of the principal chiefs, and the two parties signed a second peace at Longjumeau. The people, who foresaw the motives and results, gave to it the name of the *badly established peace*; it suspended hostilities with difficulty, but assassinations multiplied.

The badly established peace, 1563.

L'Hospital once more uttered words of wisdom, and endeavoured to struggle against passionate feelings; but he opposed them with a powerless rampart. Crime was reigning; it was necessary to get rid of L'Hospital,\* and soon the seals were demanded from him.† He retired into his lands, where he sought, in literature and in the practice of domestic virtues, a distraction of the calamities which afflicted his attention, and from the still greater evils which he foresaw. France owes to him among other useful reforms, that of the calendar; by a decree of 1563, he caused it to be decreed that the year, which, until then, had commenced at Easter, should begin on the 1st of January.‡

R-form of the calendar, 1563.

L'Hospital having retired from public affairs, nothing could restrain the rage of the factions. He was not ignorant of it, and displaying

\* J. Droz, *Notice sur Michel de l'Hospital*.

† He nevertheless preserved to his death the dignity of Chancellor, which was immovable.

‡ This reform, of which the advantages were only properly appreciated a little later, was not definitely carried out and adopted till 1587.

one day his long white beard to those whom his old age troubled :—  
 “When this snow shall be melted,” said he, “there will be nothing remaining but mud.” Moderate men, like himself, received the derisive name of *politiques*, and were hated by all parties. Médis herself seemed to have renounced temporising and prudence. She endeavoured, but vainly, to take by surprise the Protestant chiefs. Then there appeared edicts thundering against the Calvinists, and their religion was forbidden throughout the kingdom. They took up arms in all parts; in their fury they profaned the altars, they devastated, burnt the churches and the convents, and committed many atrocities. Briqueмонт, one of their chiefs, excited them to murder, carrying himself, hung round his neck, a necklace composed of the ears of priests; but Louis of Bourbon, Duke of Montpensier, a Catholic general, was far above all in barbarity, and history refuses to repeat the frightful executions, of which he gloried in being the inventor.

The Catholic army, under the Duke of Anjou and of Marshal Tavanne, met the Protestant army, commanded by Condé, upon the banks of the Charente, near to Jarnac. There a sanguinary and unequal combat took place, sustained by the cavalry of the Prince alone, against all the forces of the Catholics, Condé, wounded in the evening, wore his arm in a sling; at the moment of action an impetuous horse broke his leg. “Go on, noble French!” said the Prince to the nobles who surrounded him, “behold the combat which you have so much desired; remember in what state Louis of Bourbon entered into it for Christ and his country.” Thrown from his horse, Condé defended himself like a hero; among those who made a rampart of their bodies might have been seen an old man, named La Vergne, with twenty-five young men, his sons, his grandsons, and his nephews; all fought valiantly until La Vergne had perished with fifteen of his relatives; the others were made prisoners. Condé then gave himself up; but soon Montesquiou, captain of the guards of the Duke of Anjou, rushed in and assassinated the Prince in a cowardly manner by a pistol-shot. Thus died Louis of Condé, 1669. who had scarcely attained thirty-nine years.

The Protestants were beaten, and the Court abandoned itself to all the intoxication of triumph, when the Queen of Navarre, Jeanne



d'Albret,\* a woman of great piety and of noble courage, reanimated the hopes of her party. She repaired to Cognac, in Augoumois, where the remains of the Calvinistic army were assembled, and took with her Henry her son, Prince of Bearn, and Henry, son of Prince Louis of Conde, both sixteen years old. Jeanne presented herself to the soldiers, holding by the hand the two young men. "I offer to you," said she, "my son, and I entrust to you Henry, son of the Prince whom we regret. May Heaven grant that they both show themselves worthy of their ancestors." The Prince of Bearn advanced immediately, and said: "I swear to defend the religion and to persevere in the common cause, until death or victory has restored to us all that liberty for which we fight." Conde signified by a gesture that a similar resolution animated him, and immediately the Prince of Bearn was proclaimed General-in-Chief, amid the applause of the army under the direction of Coligni.

Jeanne d'Albret presents as chiefs to the Protestant army her son Henry, Prince of Bearn, and the young Prince of Condé, 1569.

The Duke of Deux-Ponts, at the head of a considerable body of Germans, came to join the Calvinists, whose forces were raised to more than twenty-five thousand men. The combat of Roche-Abeille, the first where Henry of Bearn distinguished himself, was to their advantage. Soon the two armies found themselves in presence of each other, near *Moncontour*, in Poitou; a simple defile separated them. The Calvinists were the most numerous, but they occupied a bad position. Coligni wished to change it; the soldiers wished to fight. The action commenced; the carnage of the Protestants was frightful, and, in half an hour, of twenty-five thousand men only five or six hundred rallied round Coligni. That warrior, severely wounded, showed himself in that battle, so fatal to his party, above himself even. He had recently lost his brother and saved all the remnant of his army. He took them back into Languedoc together with the young Princes, where Montgomery rejoined them with his troops. The Calvinists reappeared once more in an imposing attitude, and Coligni conducted them towards Paris by forced marches. On both sides the need for

Combat of Roche-Abeille.

Battle of Moncontour, 1570.

\* A queen who had nothing womanly but her sex; her soul was entirely devoted to manly concerns, her mind was powerful in great affairs, and her heart invincible in adversity. (D'Aubigne, *Hist. univ.*, t. II., liv. Ier, Ch. II.)

Peace of St. Ger- rest was extreme, and peace was signed at Saint Germain,  
main, 1570. where the Court was then being held.

The Calvinists, besides the advantages accorded by preceding treaties, obtained their choice of four places of safety; they chose Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac; and Charite, which they engaged to restore at the end of two years. Charles IX, married almost immediately Elizabeth of Austria, daughter of Maximilian II., and from that time he profoundly concealed his hatred of the Reformers. The gloomy Philip, at the same period, practised the most atrocious cruelties on his subjects. The Moors who composed the most industrious portion of the inhabitants of Spain, had been, on account of their religion, reduced to the most miserable condition

Cruelties of under Philip II. they were decimated by the sword  
Philip II. and by fire. The Spanish monarch, assured against the attacks of the Mussulman by the victory of Lepanto, wished also to extirpate heresy in his states, and the Duke of Alba was the worthy minister of his fury in Belgium. Philip, glorying in the frightful triumphs of his General, did not cease to excite Charles to imitate him; but Charles had no need of his advice in order to become his rival.

Peace called back into France order and security; the people hoped that they had seen the end of so many evils. The attentions and benevolent proceedings of the Court towards the Protestants, in place of making them more circumspect, appeared to them to be so many guarantees of a happy future. Jeanne

Perfidious atten-  
tions- paid by the  
Court to the Pro-  
testant chiefs.

d'Albret, the young Princes, and Coligni, were invited to the Court, and went there. The King lavished upon them the most flattering words. "I hold you," said he graciously to the Admiral, "and you shall not quit us when you wish." The marriage of the Prince of Bearn with Margaret of Valois, sister of Charles, was projected. The difference of religion presented an obstacle, but the King himself smoothed away all difficulties. Jeanne d'Albret died in the middle of

Death of Jeanne  
d'Albret and  
marriage of the  
Prince of Bearn,  
King of Navarre,  
with Margaret of  
Valois.

these negotiations. Some persons affirmed that she had been poisoned; but little attention was given to such an event in a time when death by poison or by the poignard was almost a natural kind of death. The projected marriage was conducted between Margaret and young Henry, who

immediately after the death of his mother, had taken the title of the King of Navarre.

The Catholic troops were on the march on all points of the kingdom. The Court effected loans with foreigners, and redoubled its attentions towards the Calvinists. The latter, nevertheless, remained in profound security. Coligny, consulted by Charles IX., advised him to stop the progress of the Spanish power, by sustaining insurgent Flanders against him. The King appeared to approve of this project, and troops took the road for Belgium. Then Medici and the Duke of Anjou—whether they were surprised at the hesitation in the mind of Charles, and wished him to compromise himself altogether with the Calvinists, or whether they desired, above all, to get rid of Coligny—posted an assassin, named Maurevel, who wounded him dangerously by a shot from an arquebuse. The Admiral was brought home bleeding. Charles was playing at tennis when he learnt this news. “Am I then always to see fresh troubles?” cried he, throwing away his racket with fury. He accompanied his mother to the house of the Admiral, and overwhelmed him with perfidious caresses and false evidences of regret and indignation.

Attempted  
assassination of  
Coligny by  
Maurevel.

Medeci already had fixed the day for the greatest of the enormities. Supported by the Duke of Anjou, she convinced the King that the moment for striking had arrived. Charles immediately plunged into a gloomy fit of anger. “Let the Protestants perish, then!” said he, “but do not allow any one to remain to reproach me.”

Every means was taken to draw to Paris the greatest number of Protestants possible. Charles, with this intention, designedly inspired some inquietude, and made them understand that it was necessary that they should be in force, in order to be safe from all surprise and all peril. They flocked together in crowds, and soon the arrangements for the work of blood were finished. A council was held at the Tuileries between the Queen, the Duke of Anjou, the Duke of Nevers, Henry d'Angoulême, Grand-Prior of France, René de Birague, Marshal Tavannes, Albert de Gondi, and Baron de Retz. The distribution of the different parts was accomplished, and it was settled that the execution would commence on the following day, at dawn, Saint Bartholomew's day. Tavannes gave the order, in the presence of the King,

to the prévôt of the merchants, John Charron, to cause the companies of bourgeois to be armed, and to unite at midnight, at the Hotel-de-Ville, and to throw themselves upon the Calvinists at the first sound of the tocsin bell. The murderers, in order to recognize each other, were obliged to carry a scarf on the left arm and a white cross in the hat. At break of day, Medici, impatient, caused the signal to be given, by the clock of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois. At the gloomy sound of the bell, the town was filled with assassins, and first of all a band of soldiers, directed by Henry of Guise, sought out the house of Coligny. The gates were opened in the name of the King; the murderers went up and found the Admiral at prayers.

Massacre of  
Saint Bartholo-  
mew, 24th  
August, 1572.

"Are you Coligny?" asked their chief, a man named Bême, threatening him with his sword. "Yes, I am he;" answered the latter; "young man, you ought to respect my gray hairs!"

Murder of  
Coligny.

Instead of answering, Bême struck him with repeated blows, mutilated him, and threw his corpse into the street, where Henry of Guise waited, and trampled it under his feet. Already death was everywhere in Paris; the Huguenots left their houses, half naked, at the sound of the tocsin, amid the cries of their murdered brethren, and perished by thousands. Tavannes, the Dukes of Angoulême and Anjou, Henry of Guise, and Montpensier, stirred up the executioners to the carnage. "Bleed, bleed!" cried Tavannes, "the doctors say that bleeding is as good in the month of August as in May." The bourgeois were rivals in ferocity with the greatest seignors. The goldsmith, Crucé, boasted of having killed more than four hundred Huguenots in one day. He who had ordered the crime, wished to partake in a part of its execution. "The King might be seen," says Brautôme, "firing from a window in the Louvre, on the fugitives." He afterwards went, with a brilliant cortege, to the gibbets of Montfaucon, where were suspended all that was left of the Admiral, half consumed. He appeared to enjoy the spectacle, and repeated, it is said, the frightful saying of Vitellius: "The body of a slain enemy always smells well." The massacre lasted three days in Paris, where five thousand persons lost their lives. On the third day Charles summoned the Parliament; he dared to justify his conduct, and the President, Christopher de Thou, had the shameless weakness to approve of it. Royal orders were hurried into all the provinces, commanding similar massacres. Meaux, Angers, Bourges,

Orleans, Lyon, Toulouse, and Rouen became the theatres of horrible scenes; many governors, however, refused to obey. The Viscount d'Orthez, commander of Bayonne, wrote the King:—"Sire, I have found in the town only good citizens and brave soldiers, but no executioner." The Count of Tendes, in Provence, made a similar answer: the deaths of both of them were sudden and premature. The young King of Navarre and Henry de Condé ran the risk of their lives during the massacre; Charles made them come into his presence, and said to them, in a terrible voice, "The mass or death!" Yielding to necessity, the two princes apparently recanted and remained prisoners. Such were the principal scenes of that frightful day, in which the Roman court thought they saw a triumph, but of which L'Hospital said, in causing his doors to be opened to the assassins, "Perish the memory of this execrable day!" \*

Medici and Charles IX. had hoped for a peaceable reign as the result of their crimes; they deceived themselves; a most terrible civil war broke out, and a great number of Catholics embraced the reformed religion on account of the horror inspired in them by Saint Bartholomew. The party of the <sup>Fourth civil war, 1572.</sup> *Politiques* raised themselves against the court, and soon there were to be reckoned in their ranks many of the most illustrious seignors of France, to whom Damville and Thoré, sons of the Constable Montmorency, added their names. The thirst for vengeance, carried to rage, doubled the forces of the Protestants. The weakest places resisted the royal troops, whom the insurgents insulted from the top of their walls:—"Approach, assassins," cried they to them; "come on, murderers, you will not find us asleep like the Admiral." La Rochelle was the principal place of the Protestants; Charles felt the necessity of taking it. The Duke of Anjou departed on this ex-

\* That day struck him with such a horror that it could only be called death. When he was informed of so many atrocities: "I recognise," cried he, "the councils that were given to the King for a long time; it is necessary to die when one cannot prevent such misfortunes." The assassins of Admiral Coligny approached very slowly the dwelling of the Chancellor L'Hospital. His domestics came to tell him that an armed band directed its course from Etampes towards his Château. "Open the doors to them," said he, "let no one offer any resistance, and let them be conducted to my apartment! If the little gate is not sufficient, open the great one, I have seen enough of life."

(C. Lacretelle, *Histoire de France pendant les guerres de religion*, liv. VII.)

pedition at the head of a numerous army, and led the two captive princes to the siege. The defence was heroic, it lasted six months, and cost, uselessly, immense sums, and twenty thousand men to the Catholics. Sancerre also sustained a memorable siege; Montauban, Nismes, and other towns, were in the power of the Protestants. A fourth peace was signed; it granted to the reformers in these places the most part of the advantages guaranteed by the preceding treaties.

Fourth peace,  
1572.

The Duke of Anjou had just been chosen King of Poland, and soon he left the kingdom. An enterprise called *des jours gras*, (Shrovetide,) because it was made in the time of the Carnival, was attempted in the following year, in order to free the two princes. It partly miscarried, and cost the lives of La Môle and Coconnas; they were beheaded. The Queen of Navarre and the Duchess of Nevers, whose lovers they had been, caused their bleeding heads to be brought to them, and abandoned themselves to fierce transports. Condé alone was able to escape; Henry of Navarre was watched still more closely till the death of the King.

The enterprise  
*des jours gras*,  
1573.

Charles IX. pined away after the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. Often he appeared to be the prey of a furious delirium; he then thought that the spectres of his victims were ranged before him. In the last night of his life, says L'Estoile, when there only remained in his chamber two persons besides his nurse, whom he loved much, she heard the King complaining, weeping, and sighing. She softly approached the bed and drew the curtain, and the King said to her, with a great sigh, and weeping so much that his sobs interrupted his words:—"Ah! my nurse, my nurse, what blood! what murders! Ah! but I have followed an evil counsel! O my God! pardon me!"

His own blood came out from his skin and inundated the bed. He died on the 30th of May, 1574, when only twenty-four years of age.

Death of  
Charles IX., 1574.

## CHAPTER II.

## REIGN OF HENRY III.

1574-1589.

THE Duke of Anjou succeeded his brother under the name of Henry III. He was in Poland when Charles IX. died, and Catherine de Medici again siezed the regency. Accession of Henry III., 1574. One of the first acts of her authority was to order the execution of Montgomery, made prisoner at Domfront, the accidental murderer of Henry II., and one of the most illustrious of the Protestant chiefs. His execution provoked new acts of vengeance on the part of the Protestants.

Informed of the death of his brother, Henry deserted his kingdom of Poland, and then allowed himself to sleep, during four months, in the midst of the fêtes given to him by the monarchs through whose states he passed, and scattered gold and diamonds on the road. On arriving at Turin, he had nothing more to give; but he ceded to the Duke of Savoy, the towns of Pignerol, Savigliano, and Pérouse, the only fruit that France had gained for all the blood poured out in Italy. Henry arrived at last, and showed himself in public for the first time in Avignon, in the procession called the *Battus*, with Catherine de Medici and the Cardinal of Lorraine, all three dressed in sackcloth, as penitents. Procession of the Battus. The king and his courtiers walked with bare feet, a crucifix in their hands, and scourged themselves as they marched. The Cardinal of Lorraine was seized with fever at the conclusion of this ridiculous ceremony, and died almost immediately afterwards. No person had fanned the fire of the civil wars more than he, and no one had shown himself more cruel. Medici appeared to breathe again after his death; but on the following night they heard her crying out in terror; her women

to her and found her delirious. "Deliver me from this sight," cried she. "See! the Cardinal pursues me; he drags me down to hell!"

A new war was announced; the Protestants saw with horror one of the principal authors of Saint Bartholomew upon the throne; one who had signalized himself the most on those execrable days. Condé assembled his forces and negotiated with the Elector Palatine, in order to obtain considerable support. Many nobles of the Moderate party were united with the Protestants, and among them, in the front rank, the two sons of the Constable Montmorency, Damville, and Thoré. Suddenly the Duke of Alençon, brother of the King, suspected by the Queen since the enterprise of the *jours gras*, in which he had joined, escaped from the court, though closely guarded; joined the Confederates, and reappeared before the gates of Paris. Soon after, the King of Navarre, baffling also the watchfulness of Medici, and snatching himself away from the voluptuous snares with which she surrounded him; succeeded in concealing his flight; joined the princes, and abjured Catholicism in their camp, where he found Prince Casimir at the head of a numerous corps. Henry III. had already signed a truce with the Confederates; he engaged to deliver to them six towns, and to pay the garrison maintained under the Duke of Alençon and the Prince of Condé.

In the midst of so many agitations and dangers, it is difficult to explain the contemptible life then led by the effeminate monarch. He divided his time between unrestrained debauchery and the punctilious practices of a puerile devotion. Surrounded by young favourites, whom he called his minions, and by dissolute women, at one time he caused the shrines of saints to be carried before him, while he followed, dressed as a penitent, mingling obscene buffooneries with the litanies of the Church; at another he ran into the places of debauch, telling over, to the light of the orgies, his rosary of death's-head beads. Often he ran through the streets, insulting the passers by, or begged for the Church from door to door, with his queen, and a number of little dogs, monkeys and parroquets, in which they both took delight. Historians say that Henry III. followed a deeply-considered plan in the midst of these shameful disorders; the book of Macchiavelli was his gospel, as, following him

The Huguenots  
take up arms  
again, 1574, fifth  
civil war.

Henry III. and  
his court.



he wished to rule the great by all the allurements of vice. However that may be, his mother in this respect gives him both precept and example, surrounding him with maids of honour, skilful in seducing those whose ambition or resentment she wished to lull; without religious faith, she believed in witchcraft and sorcery; astrologers, and one above all—Cosmo de Ruggieri, were in high favour at the court. To these imposters was attributed the power of giving death, by pricking to the heart figures of wax, over which they pronounced mysterious words. The practices of a superstitious devotion mingled itself with poisonings and debaucheries in this infamous court. Sensual pleasures were the price of crimes, and Marguerito de Valois, worthy of her brother and her mother, thus bought the death of Dugast, her enemy, and one of the favourites of the King, who saw him stabbed at his feet, and forgot to punish the assassin.

Catherine de Medici alone showed some resolution in the party of the King. She repaired, at the head of his women, whom she called her "flying squadron," to the camp of the Confederates, and first seduced her son, whose apanage she tripled, and who took for that time the title of the Duke of Anjou. The submission of this prince led the reformers to accept peace, which borrowed from him its name, and was called the *Peace of Monsieur*.<sup>\*</sup> The Confederate States separated, going into quarters, the King of Navarre into Guienne, Condé into the environs of Rochelle, Damville into Languedoc, at the head of the Moderates, and the Prince Casimir on the frontier of Champagne.

Fifth peace,  
called that of  
*Monsieur*, 1576.

The shameful conduct of the King rendered him an object of contempt even in the eyes of his own friends, and made even his most zealous friends forget his exploits on Saint Bartholomew. For a long time there had been formed in the princes particular leagues for the defence of the Catholic religion; soon they joined together and formed themselves into one only, which had for its apparent aim the maintenance of Catholicism, the safety of the King, and the destruction of Protestants. But secretly the authors intended to depose the unworthy Henry III., descendant of the usurper Hugh Capet, and to shut him up in a cloister; then to transmit

Origin and aim  
of the League.

\* The brother of the King, and first prince of the royal house, was called *Monsieur*.

the crown to Henry of Guise, surnamed the Balafré (on account of having a scar on his face), son of the great Francis of Guise, who was said to be descended from Charlemagne. Some words of the formula of the oath of the Leaguers were as follows:—"we bind ourselves to employ our wealth and our lives for the success of the Holy Union, and to follow even to the death who ever wishes to hinder it. A chief will soon be elected to whom all the Confederates are to hold themselves in submission. Those who will not join the Holy Union will be treated as enemies, and pursued sword in hand. The chief alone will decide the disputes which may arise between the Confederates, and they will only have recourse to the ordinary magistrates, by his permission." The Leaguers thus transferred all the royal power to their future chief, who was to be the Duke of Guise. Pope Gregory XIII. encouraged them, and Philip II. promised to support them both with men and money.

This League had already become formidable when Henry came to know of it, and understand the aim of the association. He assembled, in 1576, the States-General at Blois, which he inaugurated by an address filled with dignity. The greater part of the deputies were attached to the League. The King, by the advice of his mother, baffled their schemes and deceived the hopes of Henry of Guise, by declaring that he himself was the chief of the Holy Union. They drew up a formulary; the monarch swore to it, caused it to be accepted by the States, and ordered that it be signed in Paris, and in the whole of France. At this news the absent Duke of Guise made all haste to push on the war. The three orders demanded that the Roman religion should be the only one tolerated in France; but the Third Estate protested against the employment of violence and arms in order to gather the Protestants into the heart of the Church. This wise restriction not having been carried by the expressed wishes of the two other orders, the King interpreted their votes according to his own desire, as an adhesion to war, for which he asked subsidies from the States. The nobility offered its services and nothing more; the clergy promised to maintain four hundred foot soldiers and a thousand cavalry, on condition that the government granted to them the publication of the decrees of the Council of

Oath of the  
Leaguers.

First States of  
Blois, 1576.

Trent, and the election to the prelacies. The Third Estate refused every new tax. Nevertheless, the King raised by letters patent the sum of one million two hundred thousand livres to meet the expense, said he, for the war resolved upon by the States; he revoked the edict of pacification and took up arms. The three orders were already separated, and it was only three years later (1579), that the Ordinance of Blois appeared, drawn up according to the instructions of the last States. This edict renewed some wise arrangements of the Ordinance of Orleans, and in-  
Ordinance of Blois.  
 troduced into the legislation, administration and police, some new and useful reforms. The Ordinance of Blois published also, under the discipline of the Church, some of the arrangements of the Council of Trent, that council having never been completely admitted into the kingdom.

New hostilities had broken out between the parties since the dissolution of the States of Blois, and two Catholic  
Sixth civil war, 1577.  
 armies entered upon a campaign, the one under the Duke of Anjou, the other under the Duke of Mayenne, brother of Henry of Guise. Many places were taken from the Confederates, and intrigue separated from them Damville and his partisans, the *Politiques*, or Moderate party. These successes and this defection were followed by a new peace, which prepared the way for the celebrated Edict of Poitiers and of Bergerac. Henry III.  
Edict of Poitiers, 1577.  
 granted to the Protestants by this edict the public exercise of their religion in each chief place of the bailiwick, and in each royal jurisdiction outside of Paris; he re-established them in their citizens' privileges, with right to the offices and dignities, gave them particular judges in each parliament, and granted them nine places of safety. The King permitted besides, on certain conditions, the marriage of priests, repudiated Saint Bartholomew, and prescribed the League.

The Edict of Poitiers, soon confirmed by the treaty of Nérac, could have pacified the kingdom, if the King had watched  
Treaty of Nérac, 1577.  
 over its execution; but, freed from the cares of war, he plunged again into his shameful pleasures. All his liberality, all his dignities, were lavished upon his minions, from whom he exacted

Dissolute manners.

infamous compliances and acts of fierce bravery. A furious infatuation siezed the whole court, where the time seemed to be divided between prostitution, duelling and murder. The King bestowed extravagant honours on the memory of two of his favourites, Quélus and Maugiron, killed in a duel; another, named Saint-Mesgrin, was assassinated by the Duke of Mayenne, while Bussy d'Amboise, a bold and sanguinary man, favourite of the Duke of Anjou, and mortal enemy of the minons of the King, was drawn into a snare and slaughtered. All these murders remained unpunished. The King sold his clemency; the scaffold was only erected for the people and the Huguenots, and it was an act of clumsiness or absurdity to be condemned for the crime of assassination. The Duke of Villequier stabbed his wife, who had repulsed the lawless desires of the King: he was named Governor of Paris. Licentiousness had no longer a curb, and debauchery presided at the banquets of the Queen-Mother, where Henry III., himself disguised as a woman, affected to imitate the language and the affectionate manners of the sex whose costume he wore.

Soon, upon frivolous pretexis, war rekindled in all parts. The love intrigues which, in part, occasioned it, caused it to be named the *war of the Lovers*. Henry III. had written to the King of Navarre, with

Seventh civil war, called the war of the Lovers, 1580.

the intention of imbroiling him with his wife Margaret.

It did not succeed, and the King of Navarre answered him by the heroic taking of Cahors. Condé soon

showed himself in arms in Languedoc, ready to sustain him. An advantageous peace for the reformers was signed in the following

year at Fleix, through the intervention of the Duke of Anjou, whose views upon Belgium, Henry III. promised

Philip II. had just taken Portugal, and all his forces

were then employed in subduing the Low Countries, and in struggling against the celebrated Prince of Orange,

William the Silent, who had torn away the Western Provinces from the tyranny of the Spaniards. The great Captain, Alexander Farnese, succeeded the conqueror of Lepanto, Don John of Austria, in the post of governor of that country. The Flemings were reduced to extremities, and implored the support of the French

Liberation of the United Provinces, 1581.

Protestants. The Duke of Anjou, to whom Queen Elizabeth had given hopes of her hand, could assure to them by this marriage the support of England. They proclaimed him Count of Flanders, and Duke of Brabant. Profiting by the Peace of Fleix, and furnished with the consent of the King, the duke recruited an army among the French reformers. With it he freed Cambray and took Ecluse; then he exercised in Flanders a despotic power, Campaign of the Duke of Anjou in Flanders, 1581. chastised the towns which opposed his pretensions, and covered himself with blood in the massacre of the inhabitants of Antwerp, executed by his orders. Driven away by those who had called him, he retired into his own domains, and there he died. A month later, the illustrious William of Orange perished at Delft, assassinated by the hand of Balthazar Gérard, His death, 1582. a fanatical emissary of Philip II., who, after having paid for this murder, applauded it highly.

The King of Navarre, chief of the House of Bourbon, became, by the death of the Duke of Anjou, the nearest heir to the throne; \* but in the eyes of the people his religion rendered him incapable of holding it. This circumstance reanimated the boldness and efforts of the League. Henry of Bourbon becomes the presumptive to the crown, 1583.

Henry III., although in the vigour of his life, was reputed to be incapable of having children; and the zealous Catholics turned their regards towards the old cardinal, Charles de Bourbon, uncle of the King, of Navarre, they depended upon his name, until they could throw away the mask and declare openly for the Duke of Guise. The latter placed himself again boldly at the head of the Leaguers; however, he hesitated to break out; Philip II. decided him. That monarch knew that the revolted Flemings Rousing of the League. had offered to look upon themselves as subjects of Henry III., and that the best means to remove from them the support of France was to foment the interior troubles of that kingdom. He then incited Henry of Guise by promises and threats. Paris became the focus of the League, and, from that centre, the leaders stretched out their ramifications over the whole of France. They made the preacher thunder forth from the pulpit against the heresy of Henry of Navarre

\* Henry of Bourbon, King of Navarre, was descended in a direct line from Robert de Clermont, fifth son of Saint Louis.

and the effeminacy of Henry III.; they placarded in all the streets representations of the frightful tortures to which, the Catholics, they said, would be delivered over if the heretic prince ever became king. The people, rendered furious, demanded war and the extermination of the Calvinists. The League addressed itself to Pope Sixtus V., who

Sextus V. declares the King of Navarre unable to succeed to the throne, 1585.

declared him unable to succeed to the throne. Terrified at this popular effervescence, Henry III., after long hesitation believed that he ought to draw closer to him Duke

Henry of Guise; he had the weakness, by the Treaty of Nemours, to admit all his pretensions. He forbade, under pain of death, the exercise of all religions except the Roman, throughout the kingdom; delivered the places of safety to the duke, and paid his foreign troops. Almost immediately the Calvinists took up arms, and this eighth war was called, *the War of the three Henries*.

The Princes of Condé and Conti, La Rochefoucauld, Rohan, the four brothers Laval, the intrepid, La Noue, La Tremouille, Roquelaure,

and Biron, drew their swords for Henry of Navarre; the faithful Rosny sold his woods, and in the face of a thousand

perils, laid the price at his feet. That prince, after having, in order to save the blood of the people, vainly proposed to his enemies the assembly of the States, a council or a duel, astonished them by his adroit manœuvres, and caused his authority to be recognized in many provinces of the south. But Condé was less skilful and less happy; he marched rashly to meet the Catholics who met him on the Loire; he could not cross the river, and his army was dispersed without having fought. The brilliant Duke de Joyeuse, favourite of Henry III., commanded the Catholic army; he met the Calvinistic troops of Henry of Bourbon near Courtras, in Perigord. A multitude of young courtiers had wished to follow Joyeuse; gold and precious

Battle of Courtras, 1567.

stones sparkled upon their arms, while Henry had only iron to oppose them. Before the action, a minister of

the Gospel went out from the ranks, and represented to the young King of Navarre that he had brought trouble into an honest family by a criminal liaison, that he ought to make public reparation for this scandal to his army, and a humble confession of his fault to God, before whom, in an instant, perhaps, he would appear. Henry con-

fessed himself to the minister Chaudieu, and said to the nobles of his court, who wished to dissuade him:—"We cannot humiliate ourselves too much before God, nor dare too much among men." He then fell on his knees with his protestant soldiers; the pastor offered up a prayer. Joyeuse, at the head of the Catholic army, saw them, and cried:—"The King of Navarre is afraid!"—"Do not take it so," answered Lavardin; "they never pray unless they are resolved to conquer or die." Henry rose; he animated his troops by gesture and voice, and, addressing himself to Condé, to Conti and the Duke of Soissons, his cousins:—"To you, I have nothing else to say, except that you are of Bourbon blood, and, with God's help, I will make you see that I am the eldest." The battle took place, and the whole of the army of Joyeuse was destroyed; he himself perished fighting. After the victory, Henry showed himself as humane and generous as he had shown himself brave during the action; but he did not know how to profit by his triumph and forgot himself in effeminacy. A German army that he endeavoured to rejoin was repulsed by the Duke of Guise, and his own was dispersed through want of pay. The Prince of Condé survived this victory only a short time; he died poisoned.

Elizabeth, the Protestant Queen of England, then tarnished her glory by ordering the execution of Mary Stuart, widow, by her first marriage, of Francis II., and Catholic Queen of Scotland, who, flying from her revolted subjects, sought a refuge in the states of her rival. Elizabeth

Trials and execution of the Queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart, 1587.

never pardoned either the superiority of her charms nor the title of Queen of England, which she had given to herself. She held her captive for nineteen years, and ended by sending her to the scaffold. The tragical death of this Queen, sister-in-law of the King of France, contributed as much as the defeat of Courtras to increase the fanatical zeal of the Leaguers and their contempt for Henry III. That Prince had given to his favourite, d'Epemnon—hated by the people—the spoils of Joyeuse, and abandoned himself again to shameful or frivolous occupations, studying grammar, and learning to decline nouns amidst his little dogs, parroquets and minions. Henry of Guise, however, as prudent as he was brave and ambitious, always skilful in watching his advantage, increased in public favour, and the boldness of the League was doubled. The Faction of the Sixteen began particularly

to render itself formidable. Paris was then governed by a municipal régime; the bourgeois had the guardianship of the walls and the principal ports; the magistrates held the keys of the ports. In each of the sixteen wards of the town, there was established a kind of council, where they considered the interests of the *Holy Union*. The chief of the assembly then sent in his report to the Council General of the League. All these chiefs having the same passions and the same interests, accustomed themselves to unite together; thus was formed the celebrated Council of the Sixteen, of which Bussy Le Clerc, an old master-of-arms, was one of the most violent members. They laid a great number of plots against the liberty of Henry III.; but, constantly betrayed by one of the conspirators, named *Nicholas Poulain*, they failed in all their projects. The King, perfectly informed as to all their intentions and power, and secretly pressed by Henry of Navarre to join with him, thought of seeking a refuge in his army; then taking suddenly a bold resolution, he forbade Guise to approach Paris. But such was the poverty of the treasury, that it could not furnish twenty-five crowns to send a courier to the Duke. The letter of the King was sent by the post, but he denied that he had received it.

Called by the Leaguers, Guise entered Paris amid the acclamations of the multitude; his feeble escort increased to an idolatrous crowd, eager to see him and to touch his person or his dress. The people called him the new Gideon, the new Maccabæus. "France," says an historian of the time, "was foolish about that man." He descended at the house of Medici, who conducted him, without guards, to her son at the Louvre. The King deliberated as to whether he would stab him on the spot. Colonel Alphonse offered his arm, and Henry hesitated. "Why have you come here, in spite of my orders?" said he to the Duke on perceiving him; Guise feigned that he was ignorant of them, and answered that he came to justify himself for the calumnies of which he had been the object; then alarmed at the fierce looks of those around, he bowed and disappeared; on the morrow he returned to the Louvre, but well accompanied, and more disposed to give than to receive the law. He requested that a war to the death should be made against the Huguenots, and that the favourites Epemon, La Valette

Council of the Sixteen.

The Duke of Guise returns to Paris, 1588.



and all suspected people, should be driven from the court. The feeble monarch yielded, on condition that the Duke would assist in purging Paris of foreigners and people without occupation. Guise promised it, and the people murmured loudly. The King ordered the nobles to place themselves in arms round him, and sent for four thousand Swiss to come to Paris. They arrived, carrying their arms raised and their banners unfolded. The sight of them rendered the people furious, and excited a general uprising; the streets were soon unpaved, and the windows furnished with stones; they stretched chains across and behind them the multitude improvised a thousand barricades; the royal troops saw themselves invested and attacked on all sides, without hope of retreat or safety. The King, in consternation, entreated the Duke of Guise to stop the disorders and effusion of blood. "They are escaped bulls," coldly replied the Duke of Guise; "I am not able to restrain them," at last, when he thought that it was time to act, he left his hotel, and showed himself to the people, with a slight cane in his hand. On seeing him the crowd gave itself up to frantic transports of delight, and the barricades fell before him. Guise thus penetrated almost as far as the posts of the unfortunate Swiss; he caused the fighting to cease, opened up a road for them and saved their lives. Medici hastened to meet him; they carried her over the barricades, almost close to Guise; she negotiated with him. He asked that the Bourbons be deprived of their privileges, for places of safety, for money, and for war. Medici prolonged the interview, in the midst of which the Duke learnt that the King had fled from Paris. At this unexpected news, "I am dead, madame," said he; "the King is going to destroy me." Taking advantage of the tumult, Henry III. had left Paris at a gallop, and did not believe himself in safety till he was at Chartres, when he was rejoined by his troops and court. This famous day, when the people delivered Paris to the Duke of Guise, was called in history the *Battle of the Barricades*.

Battle of the  
Barricades,  
12th May, 1589.

Guise set to work to gain profit out of his victory by exercising the functions of the King before taking the title. He assembled the people, caused new town officers to be created, and other captains; then he prayed the first President, Achille de Harlay, to assemble the Parliament, in order to undertake measures suitable to the circum-

tances. But that magistrate only answered his requests by these

bold and severe remarks :—" It is a great pity," he said,  
Excellent remarks of Achille de Harlay. " when the valet drives away the master ; but, my soul

is God's, my heart is the King's, and my body is with the wicked." Guise insisted. " When the Majesty of the Prince is violated," boldly replied Harlay, " the magistrate has no more authority." President Brisson showed himself more flexible, and lent himself to the wishes of the Duke of Guise. The latter, however, having failed in his project of carrying off the King, endeavoured to repel every suspicion of violence. He did not wish to be reproached with having driven away his master before he was able to crush him. He then thought, secretly counselled by Medici, to appease the anger of Henry, and he inspired the same desire in the people. The Parisians, informed of the taste of the King for processions, thought of leading one almost to Chartres, and the chiefs of the League lent themselves to this caprice. Their impetuous friends, monks of every order, the most dissolute women dressed in sackcloth, wished to join this extravagant procession. Henry de Joyeuse, a courtier who had become

Procession called that of the Beaten, 1558.

a monk, marched at the head, under the name of *Frère Ange* (brother Angel). Two capuchins were on either side, representing one the Virgin the other the Magdalen.

*Frère Ange* carried with difficulty an enormous cardboard crucifix, and four vigorous attendants scourged him when he showed signs of weakness. Trumpets and kettles announced the march of the procession. The frivolous monarch, contrary to general expectation, only regarded it with disgust, and saw in the pretended penitents none but rebels. Nevertheless, the negotiations continued. Henry consented to meet with the Duke of Guise ; the famous *Edict of Union* appeared, and the King seemed to be delivered over to his enemy. He engaged by this edict to destroy the heretics even to the last man ; he disinherited Henry of Bourbon from the throne, named Guise Generalissimo, with absolute power, and gave over to him, for many years, several places of safety.

These accessions concealed the designs of the King. He had already taken, without consulting his mother, an extreme resolution, and to accomplish it, the States-General were convoked again at Blois. Henry of Guise and the Cardinal his brother, presented themselves

there boldly. The deputies were numerous; more than five hundred came, and amongst them might be distinguished Guy-Coquille, a celebrated jurisconsult and writer on the laws of foreign nations; the Advocate-General, Etienne Pasquier, author of *Recherches sur France*, and Michael Montaigne, whose *Essays* are still one of the most precious monuments of the French language. The election had been made under the influence of the Guises, and the greater part of the deputies belonged to the League. The King opened the States on the 16th of October in the great saloon of the Château of Blois; he protested, in a very remarkable discourse, his ardent desire to root out heresy and remedy the evils of the country, "which he had not altogether caused," said he, "but for all of which he was not going to excuse himself." He deplored the necessity that there was for asking from the States new subsidies, and he threw back the fault upon those who had wished to use violence towards himself, and who stirred up troubles in the State by means of leagues and illegal associations, pointing out clearly the Duke of Guise, upon whom every eye was turned. The latter appeared to be the king of that imposing assembly of which he was the soul. An historian of the time has depicted him "piercing with his eyes the density of the assembly, in order to recognize and distinguish his followers, and with one glance alone to strengthen them in hope of the advancement of his designs, of his fortune, and his greatness, and to say to them without speaking:—"I see you."\* After the meeting, the Duke of Guise forced from the King a humiliating concession; he enacted and obtained that Henry should cut out from his harangue, in publishing it, the passages where he and his followers were designated as factious. His project, which he little disguised, was to depose the feeble monarch and to cause himself to be proclaimed in his place. His pride was flattered by listening to his imprudent friends, who compared him to Pepin, while they dishonoured the monarch by the name of the *Idler-King*. His sister, the ardent Duchess of Montpensier, transported with rage against Henry III., carried at her girdle golden scissors, destined, she said, to make a monk's tonsure for the new Chilpéric.

Second State of  
Blois, 1588.

\* Mathieu, *Histoire de France*.

These rash speeches were reported to the King, and confirmed him in the violent resolution that he had taken. He took the sacrament with his enemy, and, in dividing the host at the holy table, he swore in public friendship for the future and forgetfulness of the past; he had secretly resolved upon his death. A murderer was necessary for Henry; he sounded the brave Crillon, he refused nobly; he offered to call the Duke of Guise out in a duel, he would fight at the peril of his life, but he would not be an assassin. Henry ordered him to keep his secret. Loignac, chief of the gentlemen of the guard, was proposed; the King reckoned upon his arm. The hour and place were fixed; but rumours were circulated, the partisans of Guise were alarmed, and threatening notices came to him from all parts. One day he found under his napkin a note, which informed him of the designs of the King; without troubling himself he wrote underneath, *He dare not*, and threw the note beneath the table. On the morrow, the 23rd December, he presented himself to the council; the doors were closed, he guard seized their arms, and an officer notified to him that he was required at the house of the King. He directed his steps towards the cabinet of the monarch; just as he entered, Montlhéry, one of the

Assassination of  
Henry of Guise,  
and of the Cardinal,  
his brother,  
1588.

forty-five, plunging a dagger into his breast, cried:—  
“Traitor, you shall die!” others threw themselves upon him and struck him, while Loignac thrust his sword into his back. Feeling himself wounded from behind, the Duke cried out, *Misericorde!* and, although he had, says the historian of the time, his sword entangled between his mantle and his seized limbs, he would not allow the assassins to drag him from one end of the chamber to the other. He walked with outstretched arms, blinded eyes, and his mouth open, as if he were already dead. He fell upon the bed of the King. The Cardinal of Guise, seated at the council with the Archbishop of Lyons, heard his brother, who cried for mercy to God. “Ah!” said he, “they are killing my brother!” And as he rose, the Marshal d’Aumont, with his hand upon his sword, said:—“Do not stir, Monsieur; the King has business with you.” The Cardinal and the Archbishop were transferred to the Tower of Moulins.

After the event, Henry went out from his cabinet to see the body of the victim. He trampled it under his feet, as Guise himself had trampled under his the corpse of Coligny. He contemplated it for a

moment, and said:—"My God! what a great man! he appears still greater dead than living!" L'Estoile relates that he pushed him with his foot a second time, and said to Loignac:—"Does it appear to you that he is dead, Loignac?" The latter, taking the corpse by the head, answered to Henry of Valois, "Yes, I believe it, Sire." "And," continues the chronicler, "I think that, if M. de Guise had only breathed when he pushed him with his foot, the King would have fallen down beside him through fear." All the relations and friends of Guise that could be seized were arrested, and on the morrow the Cardinal, his brother, perished by assassination in the Tower of Moulins. Seeing the murderers enter, he threw himself on his knees, covered his head, and said:—"Do your commission." He was killed by blows from halberds.

Such was the bloody catastrophe of the States of Blois, which separated, a month later, without having resolved upon or granted anything. Medici only survived the Lorraine princes a few days. Faithful to her custom of seeking for force when she believed she recognised it, she had never completely broken with them, and perhaps she betrayed her son more than once in order to acquire the homage and support of the Guises. Their death cast trouble into her mind; on hearing of it she said to the King:—"It is well cut, my son, but it is necessary to join again." Henry did not profit by the counsel; he remained undecided, did not march upon Paris, where the storm was brewing, and swear anew in the States, to the Edict of Union, before dissolving them. He had allowed many prisoners of high importance to escape. His two most formidable enemies, the Dukes of Mayenne and Aumale, brothers of the assassinated Guises, remained at large, although closely pursued, and they hastened to raise the people and the army.

The rage of the Parisians had no need for being excited. The news of the gloomy events of Blois provoked the explosion of their hate and of their fury. Fanatical prophesiers, at the head of whom the Curé Lineestre, thundered from the pulpit against the assassin, and pronounced curses on his head; children, women and men, half naked, ran together in procession, with wax tapers in their hands, to the cemetery of the Innocents; there extinguishing their lights, they might be heard crying, "So may the detestable race of the Valois be

extinguished!" They proclaimed the Duke of Mayenne Lieutenant-General of the kingdom; the powers of the Sixteen were confirmed; the enthusiastic Bussy Le Clerc, Governor of the Bastille, enclosed in it the greater part of the members of the Parliament who were inimical to these disorders, and a new Parliament was instituted. From that time all hopes of conciliation with the Partisans of the Guises faded away before Henry III.

Pope Sixtus V. redoubled the audacity of the enemies of the monarch by refusing to absolve him for the murder of the Cardinal, and he excommunicated him by the famous bull *In Cæna Domini*. On the point of being invested by Mayenne in the town of Tours, one resource only remained to Henry, and he seized it by joining himself with the King of Navarre, whom he had just disinherited. "Against the thunderbolts of Rome," said the Navarrese king to him, "there is no other remedy than to conquer." The interview of the two monarchs took place at the Château of Plessis-lez-Tours. The frankness and loyalty of the King of Navarre soon gained the confidence of Henry III., and touched his heart. After a glorious success at La Noue, in Senlis, the kings marched together upon Paris; Bourbon pitched his camp at Meudon, and Henry arranged his upon the heights of Saint Cloud: where, contemplating his capital, he gave vent to his anger in these words:—"Paris, head of the kingdom, but too big and too capricious a head, you have need of bleeding, in order to cure you; also the whole of France, from the frenzy which you have communicated to her." Time and force failed him in carrying out his threat. The Monks, the Jesuits, and the priests openly preached regicide in Paris. A miserable enthusiast, named Jacques Clement, rendered fanatical by them and also by the Duchess of Montpensier, who, in her mad hatred, drew from him a promise of murder, made a vow to assassinate the King. This wretch repaired, on the 1st of August, to the camp of Henry III., and requested to speak with him; introduced into his tent, he fell on his knees, delivering a petition to the monarch, and at the same time he stabbed him in the pit of the stomach with a knife. The King withdrew the weapon from the wound and wounded on the forehead the assassin, who was soon killed by the guards.

Assassination of  
Henry III.,  
August, 1589.

Henry of Navarre, when informed of the event, hurried from his

quarters at Meudon. The life of the King was not yet despaired of, and Bourbon left him after a friendly interview. However the doctors soon declared the wound mortal; and Henry III. prepared himself for death; he received absolution, and then caused the doors to be opened and the nobles to enter. He exhorted his officers to recognize as his successor the King of Navarre, the legitimate heir to the throne, without stopping at the difference of religion; then he expired, in his thirty-eighth year, after reigning fifteen years. Henry of Bourbon returned with all haste to receive the farewell of the dying King; but he was too late. As he entered into Saint Cloud with twenty five gentleman-at-arms, amongst whom were Rosny, d'Aubigné and La Force, they heard in the street this cry; "we are lost; the King is dead!" They advanced and met the Scotch Guard, who fell at the feet of Henry of Navarre, saying:—"Ah! Sire, you are now our master." Biron, Bellegarde, Dampierre, and many others, soon came to salute Henry IV.; but afterwards, at ten paces from him, they were heard to say:—"That they would rather give themselves up to every kind of enemy than suffer a Huguenot King!"\* This remark alone expresses all the difficulties of the new reign.

Never had France been seen nearer to ruin than at the end of this reign, when it was divided into three parties, desperately bent on destroying each other; the Royalists, the Leaguers, and the Calvinists or Huguenots. Then provinces, cities,†

Situation of the kingdom.

\* Sully, *Economies royales*.—D'Aubigné, liv. II.

† *Division of the provinces and towns between the League, the Royalists, and the Huguenots.* In nearly all the provinces there were some towns belonging to each of the three factions which divided the State. The League ruled in the North in Normandy, Picardy and Ile-de-France; in the East in Burgundy, in the West in Brittany, and in the South in Provence; it possessed in the other provinces among various important places, Mayenne, Le Mans, Chartres, Orleans, Verdun, Bourges, Périgueux, Cahors, Agen, Narbonne, Toulouse, Montpellier, Alby, and Valence. The Royalists did not possess any great province, but they were disseminated throughout all. Their principal places were: Dieppe, Coutances, Caen, and Saint-Lô, in Normandy; Calais, Boulogne and Compiègne, in Picardy; in the centre they held Charité, Blois, Tours, Angers, Saumur, Clermont-Ferrand and Limoges; in the South, Bordeaux, Bayonne, and Carcassonne; lastly, in the West, Brest, Vannes, Rennes, and Saint-Malo. The Huguenots ruled in half of Dauphiné and in almost all Poitou and Guienne, of which the great towns belonged to the Royalists. In the North they only had Sedan and the Principality of Bouillon; many towns in Brittany, Roche-Bernard, Rieux and Rochefort, were in their power, also the important place of Rochelle in Aunis, and that of Saumur in Anjou. They also possessed Saint-Jean d'Angely, in Saintonge, Tulle, and some other places.

and families, which were often divided, might be seen armed against one another. War was everywhere dragging in its wake misery and anarchy. The great nobles, quartered in their governments, aspired, in the midst of the general confusion, to see arise again to their advantage the ancient feudality; they coined money, levied armies and taxes, braving the authority of the monarch and the laws, and recognizing no power but their own. Such was the nearly desperate state of the kingdom in 1589, at the death of the last Prince of the House of Valois; but Henry IV. was about to reign and become the deliverer of France. With him the branch of the Bourbons mounted the throne; that of the Valois had reigned two hundred and sixty-one years, and died out after having given thirteen Kings to France.



## CHAPTER III.

FROM THE DEATH OF HENRY III. TO THE PEACE OF VERVINS AND THE  
PROMULGATION OF THE EDICT OF NANTES.

1589-1598.

HENRY IV.

THIS history has often saddened the reader by showing in it the lot of people abandoned to feeble, unskilful sanguinary hands. To the cry of humanity—too frequently outraged or misunderstood—is now to succeed love for the most truly French King who had ever occupied the throne. To him providence had reserved the double task of pacifying his country and healing its deep wounds.

Accession of  
House of Bour-  
bon, 1589.

This prince had been brought up by his pious and noble mother, Jeanne d'Albret, in the fear of God and the principles of virtue. Torn away by her, while still very young, from the corruption of the court of Charles IX., he passed his tender years in the plains of Béarn, surrounded by companions of his own age. He knew the men by living from his infancy among them; it was thus that he learned to love them and compassionate their misfortunes. Tried early by adversity, he knew how to support it with courage and to conquer it. No prince had found himself in a more difficult position than was his after the death of Henry of Valois; having before him the League, the anathemas of the Pope, the gold of Philip II., and the half of his own army; and while his predecessor had scarcely breathed his last sigh, he was exposed to a hard trial. The Catholic chiefs held council, and declared to the King, by the mouthpiece of d'O, superintendent of the finances, that the moment had now come to choose between the misery of a King of Navarre and

Declaration of  
the Catholic chief  
to the King of  
Navarre.

the high condition of a King of France; but that, if he wished to reign over the kingdom he must become a Catholic. The King turned pale at these words; then, having recovered his presence of mind, he pronounced these words:—

Excellent answer  
of Henry IV.

“Among the astonishments which God has brought upon us during twenty-four hours, I receive one from you, Messieurs, which I had not expected. Are your tears already dried up? Have the memory of your loss and the prayers of your King vanished away in three hours, with the respect which we owe to the words of a dying friend? It is not possible that all you who are here would consent to all the points that I have just heard. And from whom could you expect such a change in his belief except from one who had none? Would it be more agreeable to have a King without a God? Will you assure yourselves in the faith of an atheist, and, in the days of battle will you follow with assurance the wishes and the auspices of a perjurer and an apostate? Yes, the King of Navarre, as you say, has suffered great miseries, and is not astonished at it; but can he despoil heart and soul for the entry of royalty? Those who will not take a more mature deliberation, those whom their fear and the brief prosperity of the enemies of the state have removed from us, to them I freely give leave to seek salaries under insolvent masters. I will have among the Catholics those who love France and honour.” In spite of this noble answer, eight hundred gentlemen-at-arms and nine regiments left his banners. A small number of devoted friends, with the Swiss, and some companies of cavalry, formed the permanent foundation of his forces. His followers came one by one to arrange themselves under his banner, and, in default of pay, they returned to their own homes, to remain for some months. It was necessary too, to run from town to town, struggling and negotiating without intermission.

Fanaticism and delirium were carried to their height in Paris when they learnt that Henry III. was assassinated. The Duchess of Montpensier flung herself upon the neck of the first man who bore the news; then she entered a carriage, with Anne d'Este, her mother, and rode through the streets, crying, “*Good news!*” and inciting the people to rejoice. They lighted bonfires; the preachers made eulogics on Jacques Clément

Mad joy in Paris  
after the death of  
Henry III.

whom they called a martyr. They ran in crowds to see his mother, a poor villager, welcomed by the Duchess of Montpensier. The portrait of the regicide was placed on the altar while the people before it, on their knees, cried:—*Saint Jacques Clément, pray for us! Blessed*, said (in the language of the Scripture, the haranguers of the Sixteen) *blessed is the womb that bore thee, blessed the breasts that gave thee suck!* Then they insulted the memory of the Valois, and spread abroad furious invectives against Henry of Bourbon, recalling the Edict of Union, the bull of the Pope, and the decrees of the Sorbonne, which declared him deprived of the throne. They sought a chief, and their regards turned towards Mayenne, brother of Henry of Guise, and alone in his family capable of directing affairs. Mayenne took the title of Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and caused to be proclaimed King, under the name of Charles X., the old Cardinal of Bourbon, whom Henry IV., his nephew, held a prisoner at Tours. He went out from Paris afterwards at the head of twenty-five thousand men, making it public that *he was going to take the Béarnais*. He met, near Dieppe, with all his forces, the feeble army of the King, composed altogether of seven thousand soldiers. Henry sustained many attacks in his camp, and won a signal advantage in a bloody combat which took place near the village of Arques. Three flags fell into the hands of Mayenne, who hastened to send them to Paris as pledges of a victory, announcing that he was going to lead Henry into the capital bound and tied. The intoxication of the Parisians lasted until Henry IV., strengthened by five thousand English and a numerous nobility, appeared before Paris, attacked the faubourgs, and took possession of them, driving back the Parisians into the interior of the town. He allowed the pillage of the faubourgs, in order that the booty might serve as pay to his soldiers; but he prevented murder, incendiarism, and extreme licentiousness, and caused the churches and monasteries to be preserved. In vain he offered battle to the Duke of Mayenne, and quitted Paris in order to subdue Lower Normandy, of which he made himself master. The ambassador of Venice at this time presented to him letters of credence. This republic was the first Catholic power which recognized him as King of France.

The Duke of Mayenne is elected chief of the League, and the Cardinal of Bourbon is proclaimed King, under the name of Charles X., 1589.

Battle of Arques.

Discord reigned in France; some wished to crown Mayenne; others declared themselves for the old Cardinal of Bourbon, prisoner of Henry IV., his nephew; the gold of Philip II. corrupted the Sixteen and the population. That King claimed the throne for his daughter, Isabelle-Claire-Eugénie, niece of the four last Valois by her mother Elizabeth. Pope Sixtus V., struck with the madness of the Leaguers and with the great character of Henry of Navarre, had sent into France a legate named Caétan, with an order not to pronounce in favour of one of the two parties, except with the entire knowledge of the case. Caétan, neglecting his instructions, hastened to embrace the party of the League: pursued by Henry IV., he entered Paris as a fugitive, and was received as a martyr. The Sorbonne thundered against the Bearnais, declaring that he was in a state of mortal sin, and excommunicated all those who should think of adopting him for King, even if he became a Catholic. The Parliament of Paris, presided over by Brisson, ordered the recognition of Charles X.; the parliament sitting at Tours, and presided over by Achille de Harlay, recently escaped from the Bastille, annulled the arrests of that of Paris, and proclaimed Henry IV. King. The faction of the Sixteen added to these many causes of disorder, and carried the distraction to such a pitch that Mayenne broke it up, and renewed that Council, of which the succeeding members continued to constitute a formidable cabal.

Henry IV. again approached the capital, and Mayenne closed up the road. The two armies met near Dreux, in the plain of Ivry. On the morrow, at break of day, arrangements were made for the battle; Henry made none for retreat. "No other retreat," said he, "than the field of battle." Both sides betook themselves to prayers. Henry, advancing before his on horseback, armed at all points, but with his head bare, cried:—"Lord! you know my thoughts, if it be advantageous to my people that I reign, favour my cause and protect my army." Then, after the acclamations excited by these words had ceased, "Children," said he to the soldiers, "if the ensigns should fail, you follow my white plume; you will find it always on the road of honour." He ordered the charge, and the army of Mayenne, although very superior in numbers, was

almost destroyed. \* The conquerer immediately marched upon Paris, and caused the town to be blockaded by his troops. The old Cardinal Bourbon, rival and prisoner of Henry IV., whose rights, Death of Cardinal Bourbon. however, he recognized, died at this time; but Henry knew his weakness, and feared that he would only serve as an instrument for the Leaguers if he fell into their hands.

The blockade of the capital brought famine and mortality into its walls: each day lightened up new horrors. The people, Siege and blockade of Paris; famine, 1590. without bread, sought for nourishment among the offal and the cemeteries; a mother was known to roast her dead child, to devour it, and to die after this horrible repast. Henry suffered greatly when he saw the extremity to which these unfortunate people were reduced; he often permitted provisions to be taken to the besieged. Two peasants were surprised taking a waggon of bread through a postern gate; they were going to be hanged when Henry met them; they threw themselves at his feet, pleading misery as their excuse. "Go in peace," said the King to them, giving them all the money he had about him; "the Béarnais, if he had more would give it to you." During this siege the monks, in order to reanimate the courage of the besieged, made processions, bearing in one hand an arquebuse and a crucifix in the other, mingling discharges of musketry with the chant of sacred hymns. At last, conferences were opened at the Abbey of Saint Anthony-in-the-Fields, between Henry and many deputies of the League. Gondi, bishop of Paris, went there with the design of conciliating both parties; but he had no power to treat, and these conferences were useless. Alexander

\* After the Battle of Ivry, Henry IV., meeting near the field of battle the illustrious and faithful Rosny, covered with wounds, addressed to him these words, in which this good and generous heart depicts itself to the life:—"Brave soldier and valiant knight, your remarkable actions on so important an occasion have surpassed my expectation, and therefore, in presence of these princes and captains who are here around me, I wish to embrace you with both arms, and to declare you, in their sight, a true and free knight, not so much from the accolade which I have just given, nor of the Holy Ghost nor Saint Michael, but from my whole and sincere affection, which, united to the long years of your useful and faithful services, makes me promise to you, as I do to all these brave and valiant men who listen to me, that I shall never have good fortune nor increase of grandeur without your participating in it. Fearing, however, that speaking too much might be prejudicial to your wounds, I return to Mantes; therefore, adieu. My friend, take care of yourself, and be assured that you have a good master." (*Memoires de Sully.*)

Farnese, Duke of Parma, celebrated by his exploits in Flanders, and by the taking of Antwerp, advanced upon Paris with Mayenne, and penetrated as far as Meaux. He compelled the King to raise the blockade, forced his lines at Lagny, and revictualled the capital. Incapable of coming to an understanding with the Sixteen, and docile to the injunctions of King Philip, Farnese retreated and returned into Artois, harassed in his retreat by the Royal army. Nearly an equal number of English and Spanish troops remained in the kingdom.

The Duke of Parma forces the Royal lines at Lagny, and revictuals the capital, 1590.

Henry returned to establish his quarters at Saint Denis, and attempted to surprise Paris by means of soldiers concealed under sacks of flour. This abortive attempt and the stratagem to which the King had recourse, gave to this engagement the name of the *journée des Farines* (the Flour battle). Discord reigned in Paris; Mayenne agitated on one side for his house; on the other the Sixteen and the populace agitated for Spain, who paid them. A new chief divided the members of the League; the young Duke of Guise, son of the Balafré, recently escaped from prison, was received with transports in Paris, and many opposed him to Mayenne. Nevertheless, he played no important part. The new Pope, Gregory XIV., eager to sustain the League, sent him a reinforcement of soldiers, who only signalized themselves by the most horrible brigandage. The most fanatical chiefs were once more masters of Paris, in spite of the purifying effected by Mayenne in the Council of the Sixteen; that council modified and rendered more numerous, called itself the Great Council of the Union; a committee of ten members, elected by all, directed its affairs. These ten had been chosen out of the most violent and enthusiastic. The curés and the preachers drove the fury of the spirit of party almost to madness; they excited the people to massacre, and pointed out openly from the pulpit the men suspected of moderation as wretches unworthy of pity. The president, Brisson, and the counsellors, John Tardif and Claude Larcher, endeavoured to oppose so much excess; they were assassinated; the Committee of Ten pronounced their sentence; Bussy Le Clerc executed it. The three magistrates were taken and hanged at the very gates of the palace where they had

The Flour battle.

Violences of the Sixteen; frightful excesses, 1591.

administered justice. Thus perished the chief of the parliament of the League, the famous president who had pronounced the penalty of forfeiture on Henry III., but whose violent acts were blotted out by the new violences of his party. His death was the signal for cruel persecutions, and the power passed from the bourgeois to the populace. The magistracy and the army were purified by the Great Council, and all moderate men trembled for their lives. Warned by them, Mayenne hurried from Soissons, aimed his cannon upon the Bastille, of which Bussy Le Clerc was governor, took possession of that place, caused the four most culpable agitators to be taken in their beds, and ordered them to be hanged on the spot. Bussy Le Clerc escaped, abandoning the treasure which he had gained by his peculations. Mayenne re-established in their posts the magistrates and officers dismissed from office by the Sixteen; the bourgeois recovered their ascendancy, and the parliament acquired in the League an influence that it had not before obtained.

*Chastisement of the guilty.*

The war continued with ferocity, and the Duke of Parma re-entered France by skilful marches. Henry rashly exposed himself in the battle of Aumale, where he was wounded; Farnese nearly took him prisoner, and compelled him to raise the siege of Rouen. The misunderstanding between Mayenne and the Duke relaxed the efforts of the Royal army, and gave them time to breathe. Although very inferior in forces, Henry sustained the war with advantage, displaying a marvellous activity, and the resources of a fertile and indefatigable genius, escaping from the enemy when the latter thought they were about to seize them, and falling upon them unexpectedly, when they thought that he was far off. It was thus, that by a course of prudent and bold manœuvres, he shut up Farnese near Dieppe, between the sea, the Seine, and the three main bodies of his army. The Duke of Parma, suffering and broken down with fever, under these circumstances re-animated his own genius, then almost extinguished. Unknown to the King, he constructed a bridge in one night, deceived his vigilance, crossed the Seine, and covered his retreat.

*Battle of Aumale, 1592.*

*Skilful manœuvres of Henry IV. and Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, 1592.*

Marshal Biron, slain in the same campaign, was suspected of favouring this bold operation. His son requested from him two thousand knights, so that he might cut in pieces the Spanish rear-guard.

The marshal refused, and it is reported that he afterwards said:—"If you had done so, the war would have been finished, and you and I would have nothing more to do than plant cabbages at Biron." This

Dispositions and hopes of the chiefs of the nobility.

sentence will make apparent the innumerable obstacles which stopped Henry IV. and the causes of the prolongation of the war. A crowd of gentlemen-at-arms joined

in it for their own advantage, and we have already seen that the great nobles indulged in the hope that by it they would rebuild to their own profit the edifice of feudalism. They flattered themselves that they would preserve their governments with the title of sovereignty. It is thus that the Duke of Mercœur hoped to be recognized as Duke of Brittany, and that the Dukes of Nemours, Guise, Joyeuse, and Aumale thought of dividing the other provinces of the kingdom.

Henry again approached Paris, when the States-General of the League, convoked by Mayenne at the request of Philip II., assembled together to elect a King. He caused him-

States-General of the League at Paris, 1593.

self to be well informed in the Catholic religion, and Mayenne, in the midst of the factions which divided the States, remained undecided between the two principal, of which the one consented to proclaim Henry IV. if he abjured, while the other was devoted to Spain. The Duke of Faria and the jurisconsult Mendoza audaciously sustained, in the midst of the States, the interests of Philip II. That monarch insisted, together with the Cardinal de Plaisance, legate of Clement VIII., that Henry, being infected with heresy, ought to be excluded from the throne even if he abjured, and that by the fact of this exclusion the *Salic*

Pretensions of Philip II.

*Law* was abolished in France. He then requested that his daughter Isabella, niece of the three last Kings, should be proclaimed Queen; but Farnese had just died, and no Spanish army could sustain the pretensions of Philip. Mayenne fought against them. The Catholic Seigneurs of the Royal army had been invited by him to the States. Conferences were held at *Survènes*, and afterwards in the faubourg of *La Villette*, between them and many deputies. Henry declared to the last of these that he was disposed to abjure his faith. This news crushed all ambitions and raised a tempest in the assembly of the States-General. The Spaniards hastened to point out that, if the Infanta were proclaimed King, he would fix upon a French Seigneur



for her husband. By not naming any one before-hand, the ambitious hopes of many were roused. Charles of Savoy, the Duke of Nemours, half-brother of Mayenne, and the Duke of Guise, allowed themselves to spring at this brilliant bait, and the States hesitated. It would have detracted from the greatness and power of the kingdom, if Spain had obtained the coronation of the Infanta. Philip consented to everything to ensure the sceptre to himself, and France would have been dismembered among the most powerful Seigneurs.

Henry IV., in this critical moment, obtained a support upon which he had not reckoned. The parliament humiliated by the Sixteen, and intimidated by the execution of many of its members, only issued servile decrees, imprints of fanaticism, and dictated by a furious populace sustained by the chiefs of the Spanish garrison. All of a sudden this parliament roused itself from its stupor, and displayed a noble energy upon the advice of Edward Molé, Attorney-General; it ordered the President, John Lemaitre, to present himself to the Lieutenant-General, in order to recommend him to watch so that no foreign house, under the pretext of religion, should place themselves on the throne, declaring all the treaties made with this aim null and contrary to the *Salic Law* and the constitution of the kingdom. This unexpected declaration surprised and irritated Mayenne, but John Lemaitre sustained this decree before him with courage. The Spanish faction did not lose all hope, and in order to assure itself of the support of his powerful family, it offered the hand of the Infanta to the young Duke of Guise, in case the latter should be recognized as Queen. Mayenne, however, only feebly supported the proposition of Spain and the pretensions of his nephew. He himself aspired to the crown and made differences in the election.

Excellent conduct of the parliament, 1593.

The Parisians began to tire of so many struggles, intrigues, and sufferings. They read greedily a book where the follies and the selfishness of the chiefs of the League were brought forward in evidence and devoted to ridicule. This book, entitled *Catholicisme d'Espagne*, or the *la Satire Menippée*, struck a mortal blow at the Leaguers and the Spanish faction. Mayenne persisted in keeping power, and, although uncertain which side he should take, he united his efforts with those of the legate of the Pope to prevent the abjuration of the King, declaring that his conversion

The Satire Menippée.

did not open the road to the throne. A truce had been proposed by Henry, who fixed the day of his abjuration on the 25th of July. Mayenne forbade the Parisians to be witnesses, and ordered them to close their doors; they violated his order and assisted in a crowd at the ceremony. Henry made his abjuration at St. Denis, under the hands of the Archbishop of Bourges. He promised to live and to die in the heart of the Roman Catholic Church, and to defend it against all; he repeated his profession of faith at the foot of the great altar, then the *Te Deum* burst out, while the people interrupted with cries of *Vive le roi!*

Abjuration of  
Henry IV., 25th  
July, 1593.

The conversion of Henry IV. confounded all those in Paris who only lived for disturbances, and whose strength existed only in their audacity; they gave themselves up to the last excesses on hearing of his abjuration. The curé John Boucher, preached during nine consecutive days in the church of Saint Merry, seeking to persuade the Parisians that this act was the work of the devil; but the people sighed for rest. It remained unmoved by these fanatical declarations, the last convulsions of an expiring faction. A truce of three months, proposed by Henry IV., was accepted by both parties. The Duke of Mayenne caused the oath of union to be repeated in the States, and prorogued them till September. Determined by personal motives to prolong the war, he alienated himself from the Parliament and the people, and sought his support among the Spaniards and the Sixteen. He quitted Paris in the following year, to receive new troops on the frontiers of Champagne, while Henry IV. waited at St. Denis until the gates of the capital should be opened to him; they soon were. Charles de Cossé, Count of Brissac, son of the marshal of that name, and one of the authors of the famous barricades under Henry III., had been named by Mayenne governor of the town; he negotiated in secret with the King, deceived the League by false appearances of zeal, came to an understanding with the prévôt of the merchants, and on the night of the 22nd March he delivered up the town to the Royal troops. The soldiers entered in silence, passed through the streets in order of battle, and made themselves masters of the open spaces and cross roads. One corps of the Spanish guard alone resisted, it was put to the sword.<sup>11</sup> Surprise and fear held back the factions. At length Henry presented himself. The prévôt of the merchants and the Count

of Brissac offered him the keys of the town ; he advanced in the midst of a corps of nobles with lowered lances. His march was a triumph, and from that day he looked upon himself among the Parisians as in the middle of his children. "Leave them alone!" cried he, to those who pushed back the crowd, "Leave them alone! they are famished to see a king." His clemency extended itself to all his enemies, and he permitted the legate to take away under his safe-guard the Père Varade, rector of the Jesuits, and the curé Aubry, whose fanatical exhortations had driven almost to regicide a wild enthusiast named Barrière. The Spanish garrison left Paris on the same day with the honours of war ; the Duke of Faria and the other ministers of Philip left with them. The King placed himself at a window to see them pass, and, when they departed, he said to them, laughing, "Gentlemen, my compliments to your master, but do not return here again." He received the Bastille on terms of war, welcomed the repentant and submissive Sorbonne, and united to the parliament of Paris the magistrates of the parliaments which he had established at Châlons and Tours.

Entry of Henry  
IV. into Paris,  
22nd March, 1594.

As to the situation of the King between the Catholics and Protestants, the former had seen his conversion with distrust, and accused him of hypocrisy. He could only gain them over by lavishing on them numerous favours. The latter, irritated at his abjuration, looked with impatience on the honours and bribes heaped upon the Catholics, which they considered that they alone had a right to obtain, and they accused the King of ingratitude. Paris, however, was far from possessing the importance which it possesses at the present day ; war, in spite of the submission of the capital, continued in all parts of the kingdom. However, Amiens, Beauvais, Cambrai, and Château-Thierry gave themselves up separately after the taking of Laon ; soon, Montmorency, Epéron, the Duke of Guise, La Châtre, and Bois-Dauphin submitted, but they fixed their submission at an enormous price. It was necessary that the King should deposit in their hands immense sums and an authority which nearly rendered them sovereign in their own governments, and which, later on, was the cause of great troubles.

Difficult situa-  
tion of Henry  
IV., 1594.

He buys the sub-  
mission of many  
chiefs.

About the same time a new attempt placed the life of the monarch

Attempted  
assassination of  
the King by John  
Châtel, 1594.

in peril ; John Châtel, a pupil of the Jesuits, given up to depraved habits, believed that he could save himself from the pains of hell by assassinating him. Henry, on the 27th December, received in pardon two gentlemen, ancient Leaguers. They were at his feet, and the King stooped in order to raise them, when he found himself wounded in the mouth by a blow from a knife. The bloody weapon was seized upon John Châtel. His confession incriminated the Jesuits, his masters, and revealed a fanaticism which was not altered by the atrocious horrors of the torture and execution of regicides. A Jesuit, the Père Guignard, was hanged, the parliament,

Exile of the  
Jesuits, 1595.

prosecuted the entire order, and condemned all its members to exile. They quitted the kingdom with the hope of a speedy return. Philip II. would then have consented to a peace if Henry had wished to leave to him certain possessions in France ; the French nobles of his party were equally willing on condition that they were allowed to keep the provinces of which they were masters, at the charge of homage to the crown. The King energetically repulsed these pretensions, and, in order to remove all pretext and every excuse from the allies of Spain, he declared war against Philip, whose most powerful supporters were the Duke of Mercœur in Brittany, of Aumale in Picardy, and Mayenne in Burgundy. The last of the three, not long ago chief of the League, and an aspirant to the crown, had become the instrument of Spain ; he was accompanied by Valasco, Constable of Castille, when the King bore down rapidly to receive him near Dijon.

The glorious battle of Fontaine-Francaise, where Henry, with only three hundred horse, held ground against two thousand, and exposed his life in order to save that of Biron, confounded the hopes of Mayenne, who declared himself ready to recognise Henry as soon as that prince should have received the absolution of the Pope. A negotiation on this subject had already commenced ; Clement VIII. seized that occasion to re-establish the authority of the Church over that of the King's. By the counsels of the

Battle of Fon-  
taine-Francaise,  
1595.

Absolution and  
recognition of  
Henry IV. by  
Pope Clement  
VIII., 1595.

Jesuit Torédo, who already entreated the recall of his order into France, he showed himself favourable to the King, but he made him pay dearly for his absolution. A vast scaffolding was erected in the basilica of St. Peter ;

there, under a magnificent tent, in the sight of an immense number of people, Clement VIII. struck with his wand, in sign of chastisement, the abbés Duperron and d'Ossat, representatives of the King, and declared null the absolution given to Henry by a French prelate, gave it to him anew, and proclaimed him King of France and Navarre.

This solemn act took away all motive for war and all hope for the Leaguers. Mayenne obtained from the King that his family should be declared absolved from the crime of complicity with the murder of Henry III.; he placed his submission at this price. The edict was promulgated; Mayenne recognised Henry IV., and from that time served him faithfully. The King soon assembled all his forces against the Spaniards, who had

Submission of  
the Duke of  
Mayenne, 1598.

just taken Calais and many other places. The Royal army was weakened by the defection of a large number of Calvinists, ashamed of the humiliation imposed on the King by the Pope. La Tremouille, Bouillon, and Rohan, encouraged these murmurs. Henry, under these circumstances, convoked an assembly of the principal inhabitants of Rouen. "I have not called you together," said he to them, "as my predecessors have done, in order to make you approve my will. I have assembled you here in order to receive your counsels, to believe in them, to follow them; in short, to place myself in guardianship into your hands—a fancy which does not often take possession of kings with grey beards who have been victorious. But the violent love I bear towards my subjects makes me find everything easy and honourable." The acts of this assembly answered badly to these noble words. Nothing was requested for the finances, no resources were provided for the war, and Henry himself appeared to forget altogether his duties when near to Gabrielle d'Estrées, whom he publicly named his mistress, and whose children he brought up with a magnificence altogether royal. The Spaniards dragged him away from his shameful pleasures by surprising Amiens. Henry, without money, made an appeal to his people. The faithful Rosny, Duke of Sully, assisted him in raising some millions and an army. Amiens was retaken in the following year; the Duke of Mercœur treated then with the King, and Brittany laid down its arms. These happy successes prepared the way for a general peace. Philip II., a prey to a frightful malady, that of Sulla,

Assembly of the  
principal inhabitants  
of Rouen,  
1598.

commenced to have a distaste for human blood. In 1598, six months before his death, he signed the *Peace of Vervins*, delivering over to the

*Peace of Vervins*, 1598. King of France all the places occupied by his troops, with the exception of Cambrai.

Henry, freed from the cares of foreign wars, issued during the same year the celebrated *Edict of Nantes*, which fixed the rights of the Protestants in France. This edict, drawn up by Jeannin, Schomberg, Colignon, and the historian Jacques-Auguste de Thou, granted to the Protestants the exercise of their religion; it certified to them admission to all employment, established in each parliament a chamber composed of magistrates of each religion, tolerated the general assemblies of the reformers, authorising them to raise taxes among themselves for the wants of their Church; lastly, it indemnified their ministers and granted them places of safety, the principal of which was La Rochelle. The Protestants were compelled to pay tithes and to observe the holy-days of the Catholic Church. The Edict of Nantes, registered by the parliaments after long resistance, put an end to the disastrous wars which for thirty-six years had desolated the kingdom.

Henry IV. then left the part of warrior for that of peace-maker. The last twelve years of his life belong to another series of events, to that which re-established calm in the interior, strengthened the Royal authority, and gave to it a vigorous impulse, which allowed it to absorb all the other powers until the period of the French revolution. That revolution is connected, in some respects, with the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, and we can see in it a distant consequence of the principles taught by Luther.

The detailed examination of the immense results of the Reformation does not enter into the plan of this work; it is sufficient to say that the memorable event, in spite of the bloody wars which were among its immediate consequences, communicated a great movement to the human mind. It assisted almost everywhere to separate the spiritual from the temporal power, broke the yoke of the scholastic spirit, and replaced it by a critical and philosophical spirit, the influence of which finished by endowing the people with civil liberty, and prepared the way for their political emancipation. This revolution, provoked by the abuses of the Church,

Considerations  
upon reform,  
and the state of  
Europe.

undertaken by Luther and other eager spirits, and continued afterwards by the efforts of reason and by the letting loose of all the human passions, could not accomplish itself without long tortures and frightful convulsions. The principles of the reformers were only imperfectly naturalised amongst us; however, they deposited in our soil a seed which bore its fruits later, under the favouring warmth of the liberty of conscience, that the Edict of Nantes assured to France.

The internal convulsions to which France was a prey during so many years, took away from it its political ascendancy in the equilibrium of Europe, and Philip II. had, for some time, the hope of making France one of the provinces of his immense monarchy. Don Sebastian, King of Portugal, had perished with the flower of his nobility on the coast of Africa, and his grand-uncle, who succeeded him, had died without children; Philip violently made himself master of Portugal, joined it to his vast estates, which he had inherited from Charles V. in the two worlds. Spain then

attained the apogee of its power. Its formidable armies, its skilful generals, and its inexhaustible treasures from America appeared to prepare for Philip the views

Grandeur and  
ascendancy of the  
Spanish monar-  
chy under Philip  
II.

of a universal monarchy; but the part that France could not sustain, England and rising Holland divided. The first of these two nations fixed in this century, under Queen Elizabeth, the foundations of its maritime greatness and future grandeur; its fleets, aided by the tempest, destroyed in 1588 and dispersed on the coasts of the British Channel the formidable armada, or the invincible fleet of Philip II.; eight years later the Earl of Essex planted the British ensign on the walls of Cadiz. The second people who held Spain in check were the people of Holland, who inscribed in that fearful struggle, for the first time, its name among the nations of Europe. Strong in its love of independence, in its religious belief, in its geographical situation, it separated itself violently from Belgium, and, protected by the genius of William, Prince of Orange, and of his son Maurice, a very great general, and quite as great a citizen, it formed the republic of Holland, or of the united provinces, and met without yielding, every effort of the Spanish power.

At the end of the sixteenth century, Protestantism and the Roman religion, the principle of the liberty of examination, and the dogma of authority in matters of faith,

Division of  
Europe between  
Catholicism and  
reform.

divided Europe into two nearly equal portions. The greater part of the States of the north, England, Scotland, Holland, Sweden and Germany, had adopted the principles of the reformation; the States of the south, Austria, Italy, France and Spain, remained faithful to Catholicism. The religious wars added much to the military force of Christian Europe. Each man became a soldier to defend his belief, and from this period dates the decline of the Ottoman power. It never recovered from the mortal blow which Islamism received in 1571 at the battle of Lepanto.

Decline of the  
Ottoman power.

Great discoveries marked the course of the sixteenth century.

The most illustrious is that of the true system of the world, made by Copernicus in 1543. It was followed by the definite reform of the calendar, decreed by Pope Gergory XIII., after it had already been commenced in France, and the reformed calendar was known under the name of the *Gregorian Calendar*. Among the useful inventions which enriched science in this century we must mention telescopes, thermometers, and pendulum clocks.

Discoveries,  
sciences and  
arts.

Literature, science, and the arts throw little brilliancy on France during the long torment of the religious wars. However, the *Satire Menippée* was written under the League, which it attacked in a manner quite as bitter as it was ingenious. It had for its principal authors the Canon Leroi, the learned Pithou, and the poets Rapin and Passerat. But among all the poets of the period none was more celebrated than Ronsard, who was a rich genius, but whose reputation is not sustained. The name of the *Pleiades* was given to a group of poets of his school and his contemporaries. The best known are Joachim Dubellay, surnamed the French *Ovid*, and Jodelle, whose style is in the worst taste, to whom, however, and to his successor Garnier, belongs the honour of having founded the tragic art in France. The bishop Amyot, teacher of the children of Henry II., rendered himself illustrious by his translation of the works of Plutarch, at the same period when Michael Montaigne caused his immortal *Philosophical Essays* to appear, the finest literary monument of the century.

Literature.



## CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE PEACE OF VERVINS TO THE END OF THE REIGN OF HENRY IV.

1598-1610.

HENRY IV. was the only prince who, upon the death of Henry of Valois, was able to set up a legal claim to the throne of France. One section of the French nation recognized him as their King immediately after that event: but in reality his reign only commenced at the period of his abjuration, and of the downfall of the League.

The treaty of Vervins gave peace with the foreigners; internal tranquillity was re-established by the Edict of Nantes: it became necessary henceforth, whilst healing the deep wounds of the nation, to recruit its wealth, to restore its strength and its position in Europe. Henry IV. worthily carried out this noble task, and, in twelve years, elevated France to the highest degree of power she had yet attained; an everlasting subject of surprise and admiration on the part of those who are not acquainted with the immense resources which her soil possesses, and which require only a skilful and prudent hand to render productive.

Two causes of agitation and disorder threatened, however, to arrest the course of this reviving prosperity: one was the dissatisfaction of a large number of Catholic and Protestant nobles, former enemies of the King, or his companions in arms, most of them suffering from the severe and economical measures of the monarch, and affected either in their fortunes or their political importance by the diminution which peace brought about. They all cherished the dangerous remembrance of the feudal times, and still clung to the hope of dividing France among themselves. Henry energetically contended against them, and neglected

Causes of trouble.

no means of ruining or enfeebling their pretensions. The second cause of disorder in the State sprang from the personal weaknesses of the monarch himself. Frequently, during the war, his intrigues of gallantry, and the attractions of pleasure, had snatched from him the advantages derived by his valour; the same faults afterwards disturbed the peace of his reign; they afforded the malcontent nobles a pretext for revolt, and for embittering the course of his latter years. The marriage of this prince with Marguerite de Valois proved barren, Marguerite, taking no pains to conceal the scandals of her conduct, lived separate from her husband; and the austere Rosny, Duke de Sully, the confidant and prime minister of the King, would, long ago, have pressed her divorce, had he not dreaded the King's weakness towards Gabrielle d'Estreés, Duchess of Beaufort. Henry had already permitted the children, the fruits of this intercourse, to be baptized with royal pomp, and more than once he manifested a desire to raise their mother to the throne. Gabrielle died suddenly in 1599; and from that time the King's ministers were actively employed in bringing about the rupture of his marriage, which was pronounced, the year following, by the Church of Rome.

Divorce of Henry  
IV. and Margue-  
rite de Valois,  
1600.

During these negotiations the King commenced a new intrigue with Henrietta d'Entragues, who, actuated by an ambitious father, exacted a promise of marriage. Henry was imprudent enough to sign one, engaging himself to marry her if she brought him a son within the year. He showed this document to Sully, who had the courage to tear it up. The monarch retired to his closet, wrote a second promise, and sent it to Henrietta, naming her Marquise de Verneuil. This guilty and unfortunate connection, particularly the fatal engagement that sprang from it, reanimated, at a later period, the hopes of the factions, and became a source of uneasiness to the State, and of bitter grief for the sovereign.

At the head of the malcontent nobles there were, in the Protestant party, the Dukes of Bouillon and La Trémouille; among the Catholics, the Duke d'Epemon, Charles de Valois, Count d'Auvergne, natural son of Charles IX., and uterine brother of the Marquise de Verneuil, and last, but not least, Charles de Gontaut, Duke de Biron, son of the famous marshal of that name, and himself one of the most illustrious and able generals

First conspiracy  
of the Duke de  
Biron.

of Henry IV. He had been loaded with riches and honours in recompense for his glorious services, and named, at thirty-three years of age, Marshal of France and Governor of Burgundy; but his ambition was as immoderate as his pride, and it was upon him, in particular, that the enemies of France counted. Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, retained possession of the Marquisate of Saluces, which he had usurped; summoned by the King to make restitution of it, he came to the court of France to hatch plots, and to this end, entered into a close alliance with the Count de Fuentes, the personal enemy of Henry IV., and Governor of the Duchy of Milan for Philip III., the new King of Spain. One of the daughters of Emmanuel was offered to Biron, with the full sovereignty of Burgundy as a dowry; on this condition the Marshal promised, in case of war, to arouse and gather to his standard all the malcontents against the King. Emboldened by these assurances, which were carried to him by Lafin, secretary and confidant of the Marshal, Emmanuel refused to make restitution of the Marquisate of Saluces, and Henry declared war against him. Sully, recently appointed Grand Master of artillery, disposed everything, so that the war might be glorious and rapid. The King set two armies in motion, he took the command of one, and confided the other to the Marshal de Biron. The latter was forced to conquer in spite of himself, in vain he forewarned the enemy's generals of his marches and attacks, their troops were beaten, their fortresses taken. Emmanuel sued for peace, and by a treaty, concluded at Lyons, was permitted to retain the Marquisate of Saluces in exchange for Bresse, Bugey, and De Gex, which were ceded to France. Henry IV. had received intelligence of the trafficking of Biron with his enemies. In a conversation he had with him at Lyons he revealed his suspicions: the Marshal did not deny his crime, and was generously pardoned. The King, however, had been but imperfectly informed, and Biron made only an incomplete avowal: this was one of the causes of his downfall. He renewed his guilty correspondence with the Duke of Savoy, Count Fuentes, and drew into his conspiracy the Duke de Bouillon, and the Count d'Auvergne, natural son of Charles IX. They fomented disturbances throughout the western provinces, whilst Limoges and many towns of Guienne rose against

Campaign in  
Savoy, 1600.

Treaty of Lyons,  
1601.

a recently imposed tax of a sou per livre, and known under the name of the "Pancarte Tax." They at the same time spread the rumour that the odious tax of "the Gabelle" was to be re-established in Guienne, and in the other districts which had been freed from it. At last, Biron and the Duke of Savoy flattered themselves with the belief that an approaching insurrection was about to aid their projects.

Meanwhile, the King had become acquainted with the intrigues of the Marshal, whilst the latter believed himself in profound security.

Lafin, made acquainted with the suspicions of the King, fearful for himself, and wounded by the coldness of his master, resolved to betray him. He had preserved the written proofs and details of the crime, and these he gave up to the King. Biron was immediately summoned to Fontainebleau, where the court was held; he repaired there. Lafin was there before him, and on his arrival said to him:—"Take courage; they know nothing!" These perfidious words emboldened Biron. Henry received him graciously: during a long walk which they took together he strove in vain to touch his heart, and induce him to confess; he offered him, if he would confess, an unconditional pardon and his favour; but Biron remained inflexible. He tried the influence of friends upon him, he was still unsuccessful. Taking Sully on one side, "My friend," said the King to him, "what an unfortunate man is the Marshal; I am anxious to pardon him, and to forget all that is past, and to do all in my power for him, I pity him." He made a final effort, and, towards nightfall, sent for him to his chamber. There he entreated him to speak out plainly. "Confess everything freely!" said he to him, "and I will cover you with my protection, and I will forget everything for ever." The Marshal became indignant at these entreaties, as though they were insults. "Farewell, Baron de Biron," replied the King, "you know what I have said to you." He then left him alone in the apartment, where immediately entered Vitry, Captain of the Guard, who took from him his sword, and made him prisoner. "My sword!" cried Biron, "my sword, which has done such good service!" He desired to speak to the King, but the time was past. The Count d'Auvergne was arrested the same day: both were conveyed to the Bastille, and the par-

New plot of the  
Marshal de  
Biron, 1601.

liament received orders to proceed to their trial. Biron protested his innocence up to the moment that he was confronted with Lafin; then, seeing that all was lost, he invoked the pardon which he had obtained from the King at Lyons, declaring that, since that time he had never conspired. Every presumption was contrary to this declaration of the Marshal; but there existed no proof of his last intrigues. The King retracted the pardon he had granted without knowing the extent of his crimes, and Biron was condemned to death. On hearing this, he became furious, then implored the clemency of the King; all in vain; his head was cut off on the 2nd December, in the Court of the Bastille. Henry pardoned the Count d'Auvergne, the others escaped justice.

Trial and condemnation of Marshal de Biron.

The sentence of the parliament, and the merited death of the Marshal dealt a fatal blow to the hopes which the old feudal spirit had cherished in the kingdom. Elizabeth sent to felicitate Henry upon this subject. Philip III. disavowed all participation in the intrigues of the Count de Fuentes, and complimented the King upon the issue of the conspiracy. The two sovereigns remained not the less enemies. Henry constantly afforded succours to the Dutch against Spain, and Philip, according to the words of a contemporary, continued to irrigate in France "the bad roots which were not yet dead."

Henry was then at the height of his fortune. After his divorce he had espoused Marie de Medici, niece of Francis II., reigning Grand Duke of Tuscany. The new Queen had arrived at Marseilles, accompanied by a magnificent fleet, and escorted by a brilliant suite. The year following she gave to her husband a son, who became Louis XIII. \* The kingdom prospered by the vigilant attentions of the monarch, by his economy, and above all, in consequence of the cares of Sully. It is an immortal honour to the memory of Henry that he should have given all his confidence to this austere minister, who had so little indulgence for the frailties of his master. After the signature of the treaty of Vervins,

Henry IV. espouses Marie de Medici, 1600.

Administration of Henry IV. and of Sully.

\* The other children by this union were Gaston, Duke of Orleans; Elizabeth, wife of Philip IV., King of Spain; Christine, married to Victor Amadeus, Duke of Savoy, and Henrietta, wife of Charles I., King of England.

he found in his kingdom neither an organized army, nor commerce nor industry; forests and marshes still covered immense portions of the soil, through which ran neither roads nor canals. An enormous debt weighed upon the treasury, large pensions had, besides, been granted to the leaders of the League, and the credit of France was annihilated. Sully, grand-master of artillery, and superintendent of the finances, created in a few years an imposing war *matériel*, and placed the army upon a formidable footing; he exposed the frauds of the farmers of the revenue, who scarcely allowed one-tenth of the public revenue to find its way into the treasury; suppressed the system of underletting, together with a multitude of offices of finance; broke all the old leases and drew up others more advantageous for the Crown. Lastly, he established order and the strictest economy in all branches of the administration; revised the funds of the state, and quickly abolished many vexatious imposts. Agriculture became the object of his particular care: he permitted the exportation of corn, and, inspired by the security of his administration, he almost doubled the price of land by causing the fall of the interest of money.

“Tillage and Pasturage,” said Sully—“these are the breasts from which France is nourished, the true mines and treasures of Peru!” Manufactures not the less attracted Sully’s attention, he gave them a powerful impulse by suppressing the tax of a percentage upon all merchandize sold; but it was against his advice that the King encouraged the fabrication of stuffs made for the luxurious. Henry established manufactories for high-piled wool and for silk enriched with gold; he introduced into France a great number of mulberry trees, and very soon the silks of Lyons acquired great celebrity. About the same time, small mirrors, after the fashion of those of Venice, began to be manufactured in France. The King loved the luxury of palaces and gardens, without neglecting any of the useful labours of the state. By his cares and those of Sully, numerous communications were established throughout the kingdom, bridges were constructed, the roads were repaired; Paris was enlarged and embellished; Henry IV. joined the faubourg Saint Germain to the city, and caused it to be paved; he commenced the Place Royale, and finished the Pont Neuf, and the beautiful façade of the Hotel de Ville, as well as the gallery which unites the Louvre to the Tuileries; he excavated the canal of

Briare, which unites the Loire to the Seine, and conceived the project of uniting the two seas. The people were not long in tasting the fruits of such wise administration; their burthens were lightened to the extent of four millions, and we cannot recall without emotion the well-known saying of the good King, "If I live, there shall not be a peasant who cannot put a fowl into his pot every Sunday."

So many useful works and such sage reforms were not carried out without a violent opposition on the part of those who were interested in the waste of the public money. Numerous combinations were formed at court against Sully. One day, at Fontainebleau, the King's confidence appeared shaken; before setting out for the chase he took his minister aside and demanded an explanation of his conduct. In a very short time his friendship triumphed over his suspicions: he told Sully who his enemies were, showed him their written denunciations, and talked with him with all the effusion of his heart. Sully, profoundly moved, threw himself at his knees to embrace them. "What are you doing, my friend?" said the King, pointing to the courtiers a little distance away—"they will believe I am pardoning you." Then, advancing towards them, "Gentlemen," said he to them, "know that I love Rosny\* more than ever, and that between him and me it is for life and until death!"

Sully retained to the end the confidence and friendship of Henry IV., who unfolded to him his grand projects for the establishment of a balance of political power, and the religious pacification of Europe. The King was desirous of allying himself with Elizabeth, Queen of England, who, under divers circumstances, had afforded him, somewhat parsimoniously, useful succour. Like himself, she designed to strike a blow at the House of Austria, her irreconcilable enemy, and her projects for assuring the peace of the world by abasing that power were identical with those of Henry IV. This prince made a journey to Calais at the commencement of the year 1601; the Queen of England despatched some of her highest ministers to invite him across the channel, and in order to facilitate their interview she herself went to Dover; but the King, nevertheless, was unable to pay her the expected visit.

\* Sully bore at first the name of his family seat, the burgh of Rosny, where he himself was born, and was long known in history as Baron de Rosny.

Mission of Sully  
to England.  
Convention  
between Henry  
IV and Eliza-  
beth for balanc-  
ing the political  
and religious  
power in Europe,  
1601.

In his place, he sent his minister Sully, who received from Elizabeth the warmest reception. It was arranged between them that the two sovereigns should use all their efforts to decide the protestant succession of Kings in Scotland, Denmark, and Sweden, and to join them in a league with France, England, and Holland; that these six states, in close alliance, should work in common to complete the independence of Holland and of Switzerland; that they should enlarge these two republics by provinces snatched from the House of Austria, giving to Holland the ten Belgian provinces, to Switzerland, Franche-Comté, Alsace, and the Tyrol; that the confederation, strengthened by this accession of territory, should cut off the Empire from the German branch and restore the elective monarchies of Bohemia and Hungary. It was arranged, moreover, that the confederation should support with all its power the progress of the three religions, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Lutheranism, subsisting simultaneously without being antagonistic to each other; that finally, the allies should labour to form among the principal states of Europe an equality of power which should guarantee the independence of the whole. Such was the celebrated convention which, although never settled by regular treaty, was formally agreed upon between Henry and Elizabeth, and which had spared Europe a half-century of war if the execution of it had not been stayed and rendered impossible by the death of its authors.

Henry IV., notwithstanding his advancing years, still listened to his passions, and fresh frailties were nearly proving fatal to him. He became smitten with the youngest daughter of the Count d'Entragues, sister of the Marquise de Verneuil. He put on a disguise to meet her, and went by night, and almost alone, through woods to the meetings she appointed. The Count d'Entragues saw in this new passion of the King a means of rendering valid the promise which the Marquise de Verneuil had formerly obtained from Henry IV., of nullifying his marriage with Marie de Medici, and thus declaring the Dauphin illegitimate. His principal accomplices were the Count d'Auvergne, and the Duke de Bouillon; the former put himself in communication with the court of Madrid, and they all counted upon the intervention of a Spanish army; d'Entragues

Conspiracy of the  
Count d'Entra-  
gues and of sev-  
eral other nobles,  
1601.



was to carry off the King during one of his love adventures; the throne was promised to the eldest son of his daughter Henrietta. The King was, in fact, attacked in the heart of a wood by a number of masked men, and only owed his safety to his presence of mind and to his courage. The conspirators were discovered: the Counts of Entragues and Auvergne were arrested, with the Marquise de Verneuil and a vast number of subordinate conspirators. The King extended his grace to the two counts, who had been condemned to death, and granted a pardon to Henrietta. The penalties of the law fell upon their accomplices, and the heads of the minor conspirators paid forfeit upon this, as upon so many other occasions for the crime of their chiefs. The Duke de Bouillon soon afterwards made his submission; and Henry had now reached the zenith of his glory and of his strength. Master of a flourishing kingdom, of a treasury of forty millions, of a numerous army containing the finest artillery in Europe, he found himself possessed of the respect of all his contemporary sovereigns. Henry decided between them as an arbitrator, and reconciled their disputes. During the five previous years, he had enjoyed the favour of the Papal court, having regained it by the recall of the Jesuits at the pressing solicitations of his confessor, Father Cotton.

Recall of the  
Jesuits to  
France, 1608.

The last days of his reign were less happy. Marie de Medici, of a haughty and jealous temper, incensed at her husband's infidelities, maintained with him relations which were ever embittered by the remembrance of her wrongs. The Italians of her suite possessed her entire confidence, and formed a powerful faction at court; this party was headed and directed by the celebrated Galagai and Concini her husband, both of obscure birth and owing their rise to their intrigues and the favour of the Queen, whose pride they flattered, and whose resentments they fostered with a subtle art. Most of the old companions of Henry IV. had disappeared; some were dead, others had turned rebels; many others, again, discontented with him, kept themselves at a distance from the court, and among these last, the King saw with regret the brave Duplessis-Mornay, who had just compromised his dignity in a theological dispute with the Abbé Duperron. The King had also lost his faithful ally, Queen Elizabeth, who died in

1603, and the feeble James I., her successor, did not replace her in the esteem of either his own subjects or of those of Henry IV. But he had still Sully, who daily added greater lustre to his reign. The King had, moreover, the glory of acting, in 1609, as mediator between Spain and Holland. The new-born, but already formidable navy of that republic, attacked the Spanish and Portuguese establishments in the Indies, whilst her armies triumphed under the famous Maurice of Nassau, son of William of Orange. Henry IV. brought about a truce of twelve years, signed in 1609, between the two nations.

Henry IV. acts  
as mediator  
between Spain  
and the United  
Provinces.  
Twelve years'  
truce, 1609.

It was at this period that he committed the greatest fault of his reign, that which most troubled his peace of mind and stained his glory. Loving to infatuation Charlotte de Montmorency, whom he himself had caused to be married to the young Prince de Condé, he could not master his fatal passion. Condé, alarmed, took flight, abandoned the kingdom with his wife, and requested the protection of the Archduke Albert, governor of the Low Countries. Upon receiving this unexpected news, Henry burst forth into menaces, and summoned the Archduke to send back to him the fugitives. Condé left Flanders and repaired to Germany, whilst the Archduchess Clairier Eugenie, took the young princess under her safeguard to Brussels, keeping her out of the reach of the emissaries of the King, who suddenly declared war against Spain and Austria.

Declaration of  
war against  
Spain and  
Austria, 1609.

For long past, he had been desirous of lowering the power of the two kingdoms, and he now prepared to deal against them a terrible blow ; but this sudden declaration of war, the apparent motive of which was personal vengeance and the desire to gratify a guilty passion, evoked a general outcry against him. Henry, notwithstanding, formed some useful alliances. John William, last Duke of Cleves, was just dead, without children ; several pretenders disputed his heritage, and the Emperor Rudolph II. had summoned the decision of the cause to his tribunal. The Protestant prince would not accept of him as judge, and formed against him, at Halle, a celebrated league, known, under the name of the "Evangelical Union." They asked for the support of France, and obtained it. Henry also allied himself with the Duke of Savoy, with the

Evangelical  
Union, 1609.

petty sovereigns of Italy and with the Grisons. Philip III., justly alarmed, talked of peace, and offered his daughter, the Infanta, to the Dauphin. Henry rejected this pacific proposal; he was alive to his own wrong-doings; but though he suffered he could neither justify himself nor change his conduct. Disquieted, irritated, his sole thought was of the young princess whom he pursued, and he hastened the warlike preparations, impatient to command his army and to march upon the frontier of Flanders.

He designed that the Queen should assume the regency during this campaign, and, either in accordance with her wishes, or because he desired to render her authority more imposing, he ordered that she should be crowned. This ceremonial took place on the 13th of May. Throughout the whole day the King was restless and melancholy. For a long time past, the estrangement of his old companions, the plots incessantly springing up about him, and the wickedness and ingratitude of those whom he had loaded with kindness, crushed his heart with sorrow. Sometimes he thought of punishing his enemies; but his goodness soon inspired other ideas, and he contented himself with saying:—"When I am no more, they will see what I am worth." Upon the 14th of May his melancholy increased; he was agitated with painful presentiments, which his friends could not remove. After dinner, about four o'clock, the officer of his guard, whom he had summoned, said to him:—"Sire, your Majesty is quite pensive; it would be better to take a little air—it would revive you." "That is well said," replied the King; "order my carriage, I will go to the arsenal to see the Duke de Sully, who is unwell." The King left the Louvre, followed only by a small number of gentlemen, and footmen. The carriage was open on both sides, the weather being fine, and the King, wishing to see the preparations being made in the city for the solemn entry of the Queen. On entering the Rue de la Ferronnerie, a confusion, occasioned by two vehicles, obliged the royal carriage to stop, and dispersed the royal servants. At this moment, a man named Francis Ravallac mounted upon the wheel, and dealt the King a blow with a knife, between the second and third ribs. Henry cried out:—"I am wounded!" but the assassin, not disconcerted, dealt the King a second blow stabbing him through the heart, of which the King, heaving a deep sigh, died

Death of  
Henry IV., 1610.

immediately. The monster made no effort to escape, but remained immovable, as if he desired to be seen by every one, and to take glory from this, the foulest of assassinations. Thus perished Henry IV., at the age of fifty-seven. The Emperor, the King of Spain, the Queen of France, the Duke d'Epemon, the Jesuits, were all in turn suspected of having instigated the crime, because they all profited by it; but the assassin declared that he had no accomplices. The idea of murder had taken possession of his mind, in consequence of certain sermons that he had heard. He believed that the King was at heart a Huguenot, and thought that in ridding France of this monarch he was rendering a great service to his country. Condemned to the usual form of execution of regicides, his wonder was extreme when he saw the people ready to tear him in pieces themselves, and offering their horses to quarter him. Never did the death of a King cause such a general stupor, or cause more tears to flow. France was plunged into mourning, trade was suspended in Paris, work of all kind ceased, the country-folks everywhere flocked to the high roads to inquire the news, and when assured of their misfortune, they cried with sobs:—"We have lost our father!" Henry was worthy of the grand and endearing title of "father of the people," for the happiness of his subjects was the aspiration of his heart, and the end of his whole life. He ameliorated their condition, created for them new sources of wealth, and rendered his kingdom, whose limits he enlarged, as flourishing as it was possible to make it in twelve years after the horrible calamities of the wars of religion. The wise administration of this good King, as well as the heroic qualities which distinguished him, well merited the surname of "Great," which posterity has bestowed upon him.

Letters and the arts progressed in France under his reign, and he was their patron. The Presidents De Thou and Jeannin, the Cardinals d'Ossat and Duperron, were members of his Council; Pierre Pithou, one of the authors of the *Menippean Satire*, wrote a treatise upon the liberties of the Gallican Church; Jerome Bignon commenced his great works upon jurisprudence; Arnaud and Etienne Pasquier were the glory of the bar; Regnier distinguished himself by his wit in satire. Henry added greatly to the riches of the Royal Library; he gave a powerful impulse to works

State of letters  
and of arts.

of architecture; he enlarged and embellished the royal residences of Saint-Germain, of Monceaux, of Fontainebleau, and, above all, the Louvre, in which palace he gave apartments to artists of all kinds; Paris, in a word, owes to his fostering care much of her beauty. When Don Pedro of Toledo was sent by Philip III. as ambassador to the court of Henry IV., he failed to recognize once more the city he had formerly known so wretched and degraded. "That was because the father of the family was not at home," said the King to him, "but now that he takes care of his children, they prosper!" To the end of his days, Henry IV. might be reproached for his guilty frailties, for which he paid the bitter penalty. History is bound to record that he regretted them, and that sometimes he was able to conquer them. His reproof of Gabrielle d'Estreés is well known:—"I tell you, madame," said he to her, in presence of Sully, whom she accused, "I tell you that I would far rather consent to lose ten mistresses like you, than a single servant like him!"

The barbarous practice of duelling was at this period one of the pests of the kingdom, costing France, it is said, the lives of four thousand gentlemen in a single year. Henry IV. promulgated some severe edicts with regard to this practice; he condemned duellists to the penalty of death, and ordered that the tribunal of the Marshals of France should arbitrate upon the differences between gentlemen; he, nevertheless, succeeded in only partially overcoming a ferocious prejudice too deeply rooted in the national manners. According to the evidence of his minister, he meditated, towards the end of his reign, the abasement of the House of Austria, and formed important plans for the political and religious balance of power in Europe. "Henry IV.," says a contemporary historian, "believed himself endowed with the great mission of the religious moderator of Europe. The principal traits of his character were firmness, courage, active energy, and the dignity which springs from the sentiment of duty, and of a great mission to fulfil." \* This prince has often been reproached with having made an insincere abjuration from motives of ambition entirely personal; and it has been averred, without a plausible foundation, that he might have reigned without changing his religion.

\* Leopold Ranke, "History of France during the 16th century."

It is probable that if Francis I. had adopted the Protestant religion, he might have continued to reign over France; but when the people were persuaded that by the sole fact of being of different creeds, men were the mortal enemies of each other—when Catholics and Protestants threw themselves upon one another like wild beasts, tearing each other to pieces, during nearly forty years, the fatal mistrusts and implacable resentments thus given birth to, rendered all reconciliation for a long time impossible. It was as if they were two nations upon one soil; and it is not probable that the weaker would ever have been able to impose its chief upon the stronger; it became necessary, then, that after the death of Henry III. Henry of Bourbon should pronounce himself a Catholic, or that the civil war should not be ended. We have authority for our belief that in openly embracing Catholicism, he was actuated by sincere affection towards his people. His abjuration was, doubtless, regarded as a frightful act by those who did not believe in its sincerity, and who saw in it the sacrifice of convictions to interest; but Henry had not inherited the deep piety of his mother together with her heroic qualities. Men whose profound convictions; like Coligny, Duplessis-Mornay, La Noue, whose faith in Protestantism was as invincible as their courage, were not numerous in the ranks of the French nobility. The princes antagonistic to the Guises, as well as the greater portion of the gentlemen who ranged themselves under their banners, from the outset believed that Protestantism was a political party rather than a creed; many adhered to it—and this was a great misfortune—from the force of circumstances, from motives of interest, or of ambition, remaining for a long time faithful rather from loyalty than from religious conviction. Everything tends to assure us that Henry IV. believed, as when after the death of Henry of Valois he spoke the beautiful phrases we have already read, he would have been dishonoured by an immediate abjuration. But when at length he lost all hope of establishing peace in his kingdom, otherwise than by a public adhesion to Catholicism, after having shared during four years the fortunes of his former companions in arms, he doubtless believed that having satisfied his honour, he was now enabled to listen to his sentiments of compassion for his people; and to his ardent desire to assuage the troubles of France. If there was anything in his abjuration—which we have detailed,

without pretending to have explained, if Henry did violence to his sincere convictions, if an entirely vulgar and personal ambition stifled in his breast the cries of conscience, we are not in a position to decide, and it belongs only to God to pronounce a severe judgment. France, whom he loved, and whom he saved from the horrors of civil war, will always honour, in Henry IV., one of the best princes that ever reigned over her, and the greatest King of his age.





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